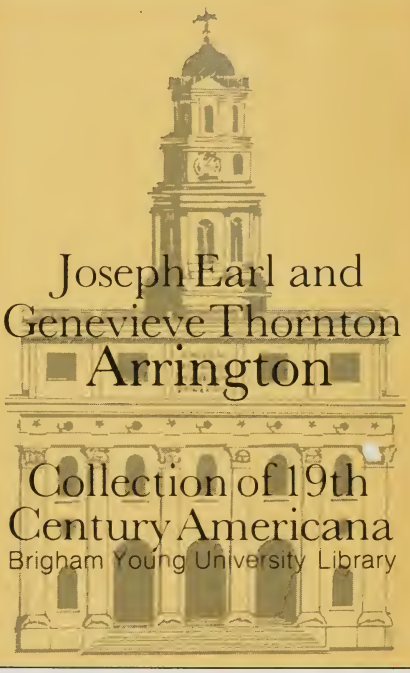

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THE

WOMEN

OF THE

FRENCH REVOLUTION.

BY

J. MICHELET.

PHILADELPHIA:
HENRY CAREY BAIRD,
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NO. 7 HART'S BUILDINGS.
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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

It is a rule that translations from one language to another cannot be made without the *bloom* of the original being rubbed off in the process. To this rule there are no exceptions, though the translation of Hudibras by Towneley, of Lucretius by Marchetti, and of Rabelais by Urchard, Motteux and Ozell, have been claimed as such.

When, in addition to idiomatic peculiarities of language, the original also presents peculiar turns of thought and expression of the writer, then is the labor of the faithful translator doubled. The present proving a marked instance of this difficulty, the translator craves the indulgence of the reader.

M. R. P.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THE reader is now about to pass through a kind of biographical gallery or museum, formed principally of the portraits of women, drawn by Michelet in his *History of the Revolution.*

Some of these were unfinished, as the author could give, in a general history, outline sketches only. These he has now filled up from the best biographical authorities.

It will be remarked that many of the articles are new, and that others have been revised and materially amplified.

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WOMEN OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

CHAPTER I.

TO WOMEN, MOTHERS, AND DAUGHTERS.

March 1, 1854.

This book appears at a time when the European war, interrupted for forty years, closing all books, leaves events to take their place.

And how do you read the papers? You look in the corner to find the names of your sons and your brothers, or, higher up, under the line where your husbands, perhaps, will be to-morrow!

Your mind is engrossed by news; your ear awaits with anxiety the sound of the distant cannon; you listen with inquietude for the first blow, which, solemn and profound, sounds for the great religious war of the East and West. A great war, in truth, and which has no limits. Judging from the place, time, and character, it will go on

increasing. It is the war of two sects, O Woman! of two symbols and faiths, ours and those of the past. Its definite character, yet obscured by political surmises, will reveal itself little by little.

Yes, whatever may be the equivocating and base-born features under which this terrible offspring of the times develops itself, whose name rings the death-knell of so many hundred thousand men—it is war—the war of the barbarous Christianity of the East against the social faith of the civilized West. The enemy, from the Kremlin, has frankly avowed it. The new struggle presents the sinister aspect of Moloch defending Jesus.

At the moment of concentrating our entire existence, fortune, and lives to this great occurrence, the most serious which has ever been, every one ought to tighten his girdle, collect his strength, and look into his mind, into his house, to see if he is sure of finding there that unity which makes victory.

What would be this external war if man had war in his house, a deafening and withering war of tears, mute sighs, or a sorrowful silence? If the promise of the past, seated at his fireside, surrounds him with opposition, with those ca-

ressing tears which rend his heart asunder, and hold his left arm, when he should strike with both hands?

"Tell me, then, beloved wife! since we are yet together at the family board, where I may not be always, tell me, before the savage deed to which fortune leads me, will your heart always be with me? You are surprised, you vow it in your tears. Do not swear, I believe all. But I know your inward struggle. What will you do to-morrow at the time when the actual event will soon conduct us far from here?

"At this table, where we are together to-day, and where you will be alone to-morrow, strengthen your mind. Remember the heroic history of our mothers; read what they did and were willing to do; the entire devotion and the glorious faith of '89, which, in a union so profound, erected the altar of the future.

"An epoch fruitful in great acts and sufferings, but connected by unity in the struggle and community in death! An age when hearts beat in such oneness of idea, that Love was only for their country.

"The struggle is greater to-day; it embraces

every nation, it will soon strike the finest moral fibre. At this time, what will you do for me? Question the history of our mothers, of your own heart, about that new faith for which the one you love is to fight, live, and die.

"God grant me firmness to strike manfully for the cause! Fortune, and happiness, also, will be there, if you, beloved, whatever may happen, remain true to me, uniting in my efforts, and having but one heart, you heroically sustain yourself under the great crisis which will overwhelm the world."

CHAPTER II.

INFLUENCE OF WOMEN ON THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY—MATERNITY.

THE great fruitfulness of the years 1768, 1769, and 1770 in children of genius, has been often remarked—those years which produced Bonaparte, Fourier, Saint Simon, Chateaubriand, De Maistre, Walter Scott, Cuvier, Geoffrey Saint Hilaire, Bichat and Ampère, a huge billow of scientific authors.

Another epoch, about 1760, is not less astonishing; it is this epoch which gave birth to that heroic generation, who, thirty years after, watered the first furrow of liberty with its blood, this fertile blood which made and endowed their country. They were the Girondists, Montagues, Rolands, Robespierres, Vergniauds, Dantons, and Camille Desmoulins; it is this pure and heroic

generation, who formed the invincible armies of the Republic, of Klèber and so many others.

The wealth, the overwhelming amount of genius of these two epochs, which arose so suddenly—was it chance? According to us, there is no chance in this world. No, the natural and very simple cause of this phenomenon, was the overflowing of the dregs of several centuries.

The first epoch (about 1760) was the dawn of Rousseau, who owed the commencement of his influence to the first and powerful effect of Emile; to the passionate emotions of the mother who was willing to nurse and hang over the cradle of her child.

The second epoch was the triumph of the opinions of the century, not only by the universal knowledge of Rousseau, but the long-foreseen victory of his conception over laws, by the great actions of Voltaire, by the sublime defences of Sirven, Calas and La Barre. Wives concentrated their ideas under the influence of the most powerful emotions. They regarded the future welfare. All the children of this epoch bore on their foreheads a sign.

Powerful generations sprang up from the noble

thoughts of an enlarged love, conceived of a heavenly flame, born at a sacred moment, when woman, casting aside her affections, discovered and adored the ideal.

The commencement was good. They entertained new thoughts by means of those of education, by the hopes, the vows of maternity, by all the questions that the child from its birth raises in woman's heart. What do I say? In the heart of a girl, a long time before the child is born: "Oh! that this child will be happy, that he will be good and great! that he will be free! Sacred liberty of the ancients, which formed heroes, will my son walk in their footsteps?" These were the thoughts of the women: that is the reason why, in the garden, when the child is playing under the eyes of his mother or sister, you see them dream and read. What is the book that the young girl hides so quickly in her bosom, at your approach? What romance is it? Heloïse? No. On the contrary it is Plutarch's Lives, or the Contrat-Social. The influence of the salons, the charm of conversation, held then, whatever may be said to the contrary, but a secondary place in woman's influence. They had

possessed these means in the age of Louis XIV. What they employed in the eighteenth century, and which rendered them invincible, was the enthusiastic love of great ideas, the solitary reveries over these ideas, and the wish of *being mothers*, in all the extent and responsibility of the word.

The sprightly gossipings of Madame Geoffrin, the eloquent monologues of Madame De Staël, the charms of the society of Auteuil, of Madame Helvetius, or of Madame Recamier, still less the female authors, the indefatigable pen of Madame de Genlis, would have changed the world.

In the middle of the century all was changed by the first dawning of a new faith, meeting in the hearts of women, the breasts of mothers, two bright stars, *humanity and maternity*.

And from these stars, and we are not astonished at it, burst out love and fruitful passion; a superhuman maternity.

CHAPTER III.

HEROISM OF PITY—A WOMAN HAS DESTROYED THE BASTILLE.

THE first appearance of woman in the lists of heroism (beyond the sphere of her family), was occasioned, we must remember, by an outburst of pity.

This has been the cause in all times, but, what is true of the great age of humanity, what is new and original, is the astonishing persistence in a work immensely dangerous, difficult and improbable; an intrepid humanity which braved peril, surmounted all obstacle, and subdued the prejudices of the age. And all this for a being who, perhaps, at any other time, would not have interested anybody, and would only have been looked upon as a very unfortunate man!

No history is more tragical than that of the

prisoner Latude; none more sublime than that of his liberatress, Legros.

We will not relate a history as well known as that of the Bastille, or that of Latude. It is sufficient to mention that, whilst the discipline of all other prisons had been ameliorated, this one only became more severe. Each year it increased, windows were walled up, and gratings added.

It was found that in Latude, otherwise totally uninteresting, the old imbecile tyranny had shut up the man best suited to denounce it—a terrible and excitable man, whose ardor nothing could damp, whose voice shook the walls, and whose spirit and audacity were invincible. With an iron constitution he had withstood the horrors of all prisons, the Bastille, Vincennes, and Charenton, and even Bicêtre, where any one else would have perished.

What renders the charge stupid, overwhelming and without appeal, is that this man, who had twice escaped, twice delivered himself up. Once, from his retreat, he wrote to Madame de Pompadour, and she caused him to be retaken! The second time he goes to Versailles, wishes to speak to the king, reaches the antechamber, and she again is the cause of his apprehension!

Behold! the apartment of the king is then no longer a sanctuary!

I am unfortunately obliged to say that though even in this effeminate, weak, and decaying society, there were philanthropists, ministers, magistrates, and great lords, to shed tears over this adventure; no one did anything. Malesherbes cried, and Lamoignon and Rohan all wept bitterly.

At Bicêtre he was covered with filth, almost devoured with lice, forced to sleep on the damp earth, and often groaning with hunger. He again addressed a petition to some philanthropist, whose name I do not remember, and confided it to a drunken turnkey. Fortunately he lost it, for a woman found it. She read it, she shuddered, but did not stop to cry; she acted on the instant.

Madame Legros managed to support herself by keeping a small millinery shop and sewing, whilst her husband was a postman, and a teacher of Latin. She had no fear of engaging in this terrible business. She saw, with a clear good sense, what others did not see, or rather would not see, that the unhappy prisoner was not crazy, but the victim of a fearful necessity of the government,

forced to hide, and to continue the infamy of its old faults. She found means to visit his cell, and was neither discouraged nor affrighted. No act of heroism was more complete: she had confidence to undertake, strength to persevere, patience in sacrificing every day and hour, courage to despise all threats, and cunning in employing every innocent ruse, to scatter and defeat the calumnies of the tyrants.

For three successive years she pursued her purpose with a wonderful determination, putting right and justice to flight, with the strange steadfastness of the hunter and gambler, but with this difference, that she was working for good, whilst they employed their bad passions to accomplish evil.

Notwithstanding all the misfortunes that befell her, she did not allow herself to be drawn aside from her purpose. Her father and mother died; she lost her little shop; was blamed and cruelly suspected by her relations. They ask if she is the mistress of this prisoner for whom she interests herself so much. The mistress of this shadow, this corpse, devoured by itch and vermin! The hardest of all to bear, the highest, the sharpest

point of Calvary, were the complaints, the injustice, and the distrust of the one for whom she was sacrificing all! It was a noble sight to see this poor woman, miserably clad, going from door to door, paying court to servants in order to obtain entrance to the mansions, so as to plead her cause, and ask the assistance of nobles. The police feared, and became indignant. At any moment, Madame Legros might have been taken up, shut in a prison, and forgotten forever; every body warned her of it. The lieutenant of the police had her brought to him, and threatened her. He found her immovable and firm; it was she who made him tremble. Happily, Madame Duchesne, lady in waiting to the princesses, became interested in her. She set out for Versailles on foot, in the middle of winter, two months before her confinement. Her protectress was absent; in following her she sprained her ankle, and was unable to place her foot to the ground. Madame Duchesne was much distressed; but, alas! what could she do? A lady in waiting opposed to two or three ministers, who formed a strong party! She was holding the petition in her hand, when an abbé of the court saw it, and

took it away, saying that she was worrying herself about a crazy, vile creature, whom nobody ought to have anything to do with.

A word like this was sufficient to chill the feelings of Marie Antoinette, who had been spoken to on the subject. Tears were in her eyes. Those around her jested. All was over.

There was hardly a better man in France than the king. At last they went to him. The Cardinal de Rohan (charitable, though a rogue) three times addressed Louis XVI. on the subject, and three times was refused. Louis XVI. was too good not to believe M. de Sartines. At that time he had no office, but that was no reason for disbelieving him, for giving him up to his enemies. Setting Sartines aside, it must be confessed, that Louis XVI. loved the Bastille; he did not wish harm to come to it, or that it should lose its reputation.

The king was very humane. He had suppressed the underground dungeons of Chatelet and Vincennes, and established a law separating prisoners for debt from those who had committed the crime of robbery.

But the Bastille! the Bastille! it was an an-

cient servant who would not harm the old monarchy in the slightest degree. It was a mysterious terror; it was, as Tacitus has said—*Instrumentum regni.*

When the Count of Artois and the queen, wishing Figaro to be played, read it to the king, he quietly said, as an unanswerable objection, "We must then suppress the Bastille."

When the revolution of Paris took place, in July, '89, the king, thoughtlessly enough, appeared to take its part. But when it was told him that the Parisian municipality had ordered the destruction of the Bastille, it was as a death-blow to him. "Ah!" said he, "this is hard!"

In 1781 he did not very well receive a petition which menaced this ancient servant. He refused the one Rohan presented to him in favor of Latude. Ladies of high rank insisted. Then he conscientiously made it an affair of state, and read all the papers; these were principally from the police, and those who had an interest in retaining the victim a prisoner until his death. He answered once for all that he was a dangerous man, who could *never* be allowed his liberty.

Never! Any one else would have been satisfied

with this. Very well, what the king would not do must be done in spite of the king. Madame Legros persisted. She was received by the Condés, who were always discontented and grumbling; by the young Duke of Orleans, and his sensible wife, the daughter of the good Penthièvre, admitted by the philosophers, by M. le Marquis de Condorcet, secretary for life in the Academy of Sciences, by Dupaty, by Villette, who was in a manner the son-in-law of Voltaire, etc. etc.

Public opinion goes on increasing; the billows mount higher. Necker had turned out Sartines; his friend and successor, Lemoin, had fallen in his turn. Perseverance will all at once receive its reward. Latude persists in living, and Madame Legros persists in delivering Latude.

The favorite of the queen, Bretueil, whose reign commenced in '83, wanted to make her adore him. He allowed the Academy to give the prize of virtue to Madame Legros, to crown her on the singular condition that the reason should not be announced publicly.

At last, in 1784, the freedom of Latude was obtained from Louis XVI. Some weeks after, a singular and whimsical law was made prescribing

the steward from imprisoning any person, at the request of the family, but upon a well grounded reason, indicating the precise period of the detention which was required, etc. That is to say, that the veil was drawn aside from the frightful abyss of despotism which had held France in subjection. Already much was known to her, and the government was confessing more.

Madame Legros did not see the destruction of the Bastille. She died a short time before. But she was not less entitled to the glory of destroying it. She it was who filled the public mind with hatred and horror against the prison of the *bon plaisir*, whose walls had inclosed so many martyrs to faith and freedom of thought. It was in reality the hand of a poor solitary woman which broke down the lofty fortress, tore asunder the heavy stones, the massive bars of iron, and levelled the towers even with the ground.

CHAPTER IV.

LOVE, AND LOVE OF THE IDEAL. (1789-1791.)

THE principal characteristic of this time was in the parties springing from two faiths—two opposing faiths, the devout and royal idolatry, and the republican ideality. In the one, the mind, excited by the sentiment of pity, threw itself violently into the past, attached itself to human idols, to material gods which it had almost forgotten. In the other, the soul is prepared and exalted for the culture of pure ideas; no more idols, no other object of religion than the ideal, country, and liberty.

Women, less spoiled by sophistry and scholastic habits, distanced men in these two faiths. It was a noble and touching thing to see amongst them, not only the pure, the irreproachable, but even those less worthy, following a noble movement towards a grand disinterestedness, making

their country their dearest friend, and for their lover, eternal right.

Did customs change at that time? No, love had taken its flight towards the higher thoughts. Their country, its liberty, love for mankind, had entered the hearts of women. If the virtue of Rome did not evince itself in manners, it did in the imagination, in the soul, and in noble desires. They look around for the heroes of Plutarch; and they have succeeded. To talk of Rousseau and Mably does not satisfy them. Ardent and sincere, adopting all ideas seriously, they would wish words to become acts. They have always loved determination. They compare modern man to the ideal of ancient strength, whose spirit they have before them. Nothing, perhaps, has more contributed than this comparison, this claim of women, to hasten men to precipitate the rapid course of our revolution.

This society was excitable! In approaching it, it seems as if a heated air fanned our faces.

We have seen, in our day, great acts, immense sacrifices, crowds of men who have yielded up their lives; and, notwithstanding, every time that I withdraw from the present and return to the

past, to the history of the Revolution, I find more ardor; the temperature is entirely different! What! can the world have frozen since that time?

Men of the present age have told me the difference, but I have not understood it. In time, in proportion as I studied the detail, dwelling not only on the mechanical legislative body, but on the movements of parties, not only on the parties but on the men, the people, and the biographies of individuals, then I commenced to understand the representation of the old men.

The difference of the times may be summed up in one word—*they loved.*

Interest, ambition, the universal passions of men, were in play as they are at this time, but the most powerful passion was and is still that of love. Take this word in all its meaning, love for the ideal, love for woman, love of country and mankind. They loved both transient and lasting beauty; two ideas united, as gold and bronze in Corinthian brass.*

* In proportion as one enters into a more serious analysis of the history of these times, is discovered the often secret but immense influence that the heart has had in the destiny of man,

Women reigned in 1791 by feeling, passion, and the superiority also, it must be confessed, of their position as leaders. Never, either before or afterwards, have they ever had so much influence. In the eighteenth century, under the encyclopedists, mind had ruled society; later, it was action, a murderous and terrible action. In 1791, feelings had the mastery, and, in consequence, women.

The heart of France beat strongly at this epoch. The emotions, since Rousseau, had been strengthened. At first sentimental and dreaming, an age of anxious expectation, like the hour before a storm, like a young heart filled with an indistinct love before the lover. A tornado in 1789, and every heart beats; then in 1790, the confederation, brotherhoods, and tears; in 1791, the crisis, the debate, the excited discussion. But women were everywhere, and everywhere the mingling of individual with public feeling; the drama of private and social life was joined; under one bond

whatever may have been his character. Not one of them was an exception, from Necker to Robespierre. This reflecting generation gave ideas, but the affections governed it with as much power.

of union the two threads were interwoven. Alas! suddenly they will be cut asunder!

An English story was circulated which increased still more in the French the spirit of emulation. Mrs. Macaulay, the eminent historian of the Stuarts, had inspired the old minister, Williams, with so much admiration for her genius and virtue, that, even in a church, he had consecrated a marble statue of her as the Goddess of Liberty.

There were few literary women who did not dream of being the Macaulay of France. The inspiring goddess was found in every saloon. They dictated, corrected, and remodelled the discourses which, the next day, would be pronounced to the clubs and National Assembly. They followed these discourses, went to hear them pronounced at the tribunes; they were seated as arbitrators, and sustained by their presence the weak or timid orator. Let us arise and look around. We see the delicate smile of Madame de Genlis, between her fascinating daughters, the princess and Pamela. That black eye, so full of life—is not that Madame de Stael? How could eloquence fail, or courage be wanting, in the presence of Madame Roland?

CHAPTER V.

THE WOMEN OF THE SIXTH OF OCTOBER. (1789.)

MEN rendered famous the 4th of July, women gave renown to the 6th of October. Men took the royal Bastille, but women took royalty itself, placed it in Paris, that is to say, in the hands of the Revolution.

Famine hastened this mighty event. Terrible rumors had been heard regarding the anticipated war; the league of the queen and princes with the German powers; the strange uniforms, green and red, which were seen at Paris; the grain of Corbeil, which only came every other day; the probability of the scarcity increasing, and the approach of a severe winter. There is no time to lose, say they, if we wish to prevent war and famine; the king must be brought here; and so they brought him.

Nobody felt all this more deeply than women.

The most extreme sufferings had fallen cruelly on the family hearth. A woman gave the alarm, Saturday the 3d, in the evening; perceiving that her husband was not sufficiently attentive to what she said, she rushed to the café de Foy, denounced the anti-national cockades, and showed the public their danger. Monday, a young girl in the market seized a drum, beat the alarm, and assembled all the women of the neighborhood.

These things can only be seen in France; our women are the mothers of heroes, and they are heroines themselves. The country of Jeanne d'Arc, Jeanne de Montford, and of Jeanne Hachette, can name a hundred heroines. There was one at the Bastille, who, some time after, went into the army, and was a captain of artillery, whilst her husband was a common soldier. On the 18th of July, when the king came to Paris, many of the women were armed. Women were the vanguard of our Revolution, and it is not astonishing that they suffered much.

Public misfortunes are indeed cruel, they attack the weak, and afflict children and women more than they do men. Men come and go, boldly looking about, or contriving, and finish by find-

ing at least enough for the day. Women, poor women, who live for the most part confined to one spot, either spinning or sewing, are not prepared to seek their own livelihood at a time when they are starving.

It is distressing to think that woman, a being who needs support, is oftener alone than man; he can find society everywhere, and form new ties. She is nothing without her family, and they overwhelm her: all the weight of it falls on her. She remains in a cold dwelling, unfurnished, and destitute of actual necessaries, surrounded with children who are crying, or sick and dying, too weak to cry. One thing a little remarkable, and the most rending to the maternal heart, is the unjustness of the child. Accustomed to find in his mother the source of every comfort, the one who satisfies all his wants, he comes to her with hardness and cruelty, demanding what she has not to give, cries, flies into a passion, and increases the misery which overwhelms a broken heart.

Behold the mother. We can also number many girls, solitary, sad creatures, without any family, and no support, who, too ugly or too virtuous,

have neither friend nor lover, and live without knowing any of the joys of life. Their little trade no longer suffices for their support; they do not know how to beg; and, mounting to their garrets, wait; sometimes they are found dead, a neighbor perceiving it by chance.

These unhappy creatures have not energy enough to complain, to make their condition known, or to protest against their fate. Those who act and make a disturbance, in times of great distress, are the strong ones, those who are less overwhelmed by misery, the poor rather than the indigent. The fearless women who came forward at this time, were for the most part women with noble hearts, who suffered little for themselves, but much for others. Pity was inert, and passive amongst men, who were resigned to the evils of others; but amongst women it was a very active, very violent feeling, which sometimes became heroic, and authoritatively ordered them to perform the boldest acts. On the 5th of October there was a crowd of unhappy creatures, who had not touched a morsel of food for thirty hours; this mournful sight wounded all hearts, but nobody did anything, everybody joining in deplor-

ing the hardness of the times. On Sunday evening, the 4th, a courageous woman, who could not support the sight any longer, ran from St. Denis to the Palais Royal, made her way through the noisy crowd, who were speechifying, and at last obtained a hearing; she was about 36 years old, good looking, and honest, strong and fearless. She wanted them to go to Versailles, and she would march at their head. The crowd jested, and she boxed the ears of one of the jesters. The next day she set out among the first, a sabre in her hand; she took a cannon from the Hôtel de Ville, harnessed a horse to it, and led it to Versailles, holding a lighted match.

Amongst the trades that seem to have sunk into obscurity with the old *régime*, was that of sculpturing in wood. There was much work done in this trade, both for churches and apartments. Many women were sculptors. One of them, Madeleine Chabry, having nothing to do, had established herself as a flower-girl, at the Palais Royal, under the name of Louison; she was a young girl of seventeen years of age, pretty and witty. We can bet pretty surely that it was not hunger which led her to Versailles. She followed the

general moving, prompted by the feelings of her kind heart. The women placed her at their head, and made her their orator.

There were many others who were not led by famine. These were shopkeepers, porteresses, and women of the town, sympathizing and charitable, as they often are. There was also a considerable number of market women, who were strong royalists, but were equally desirous of having the king at Paris. They had been to see him some time before this event, I do not know on what occasion; and talked with much affection, and with a familiarity which was laughable, but touching, and which showed a complete knowledge of the position of both parties: "Poor man!" said they, looking at the king, "dear man! good papa!" and more seriously addressing the Queen: "Madame, madame, be tender-hearted towards us! We hide nothing—we say frankly all that we have to say."

These market women were not amongst those who were dying of hunger; their trade being confined to providing the necessaries of life, was less variable. But they had good opportunities of judging of this misery, and they felt it; being

always on the spot, they do not escape, as we do, the sight of so many sufferings. There was nobody who more truly sympathized with the unhappy. To their large figures, rude and noisy words, they often join loyal hearts, overflowing with kindness. We have seen our Picardes, our market women of Amiens, poor hucksters of vegetables, save the father of four children, who had been sentenced to the guillotine: it was the time of the coronation of Charles X.; they left their business, their families, and went to Rheims, where they wrought on the king's feelings, obtained the pardon, and on return, collecting a large sum of money, sent home the father to his wife and children, saved and loaded with gifts.

The 5th of October, at seven o'clock, they heard the drum beat, and they could not resist it! A little girl had taken a drum from the *garde du corps*, and beat the alarm. It was Monday; the markets were deserted, for every one had set out. "We will return," they cried, "with the *baker* and *baker's wife*, and we will have the pleasure of hearing our *petite mère*, Mirabeau." The markets went on one side, and the faubourg of St. Antoine on the other. During the route

the women forced all whom they met to join them, menacing those who were not willing with cutting their hair. First, they went to the Hôtel de Ville, bringing with them a baker, whose loaves were seven ounces short of two pounds. The lantern was lowered. Though the man was culpable, from his own confession, the national guard allowed him to escape; they presented their bayonets to four or five hundred women who had already assembled. On the other side, at the end of the square, the cavalry were stationed. The women were not dismayed. They charged on the cavalry and infantry with stones; the men would not fire on them; and the women entered the Hôtel de Ville, forcing all the offices. Many were quite good looking; they had worn white dresses on this great occasion. They asked, with a great deal of curiosity, what each hall was used for, and desired the representatives of the districts to be very careful of those who had fainted, of whom some were in a delicate situation, and others sick from fear. Some famished and ferocious women cried for "*bread and arms!* Men were cowards, and women wanted to show them what was courage." All the people of the Hôtel

de Ville were worthy of hanging, and their writings and papers must be burned. They were even going to burn the building, but a man stopped them; he was very tall, dressed in black, and of a countenance as grave and sad as his dress. At first they wanted to kill him, believing that he belonged to the Hôtel de Ville, and saying that he was a traitor. He declared that he was not a traitor, but an usher, one of the conquerors of the Bastille. It was Stanislas Maillard.

From early in the morning he had worked without success, in the Faubourg of St. Antoine. The volunteers of the Bastille, under the command of Hullin, were at the square, under arms; the workmen, who demolished the fortress, thought they had been sent against them. Maillard interposed, and prevented a collision. At the Hôtel de Ville he was fortunate enough to prevent the fire. The women had even sworn not to allow any man to enter, and had placed their sentinels at the grand entrance. At eleven o'clock men attacked the little door which opened under the arcade of St. Jean. Armed with levers, hammers, hatchets, and pick-axes, they forced the door, and the magazine of arms. Amongst them was found

a *Garde-Française*, who had sounded the alarm, and had been taken in the act; he had, he said, escaped by a miracle; the moderates, as furious as the others, would have hung him if it had not been for the women; he showed his neck without a cravat, which had been taken away in order to put the cord around it. In retaliation a man was taken from the Hôtel de Ville to be hung. It was the brave Abbé Lefebvre, the distributor of powder on the 14th of July; women, or men disguised as women, hung him to the little belfry; one of them cut the cord, and he fell, with a heavy sound, into a hall, twenty-five feet below.

Neither Bailly or Lafayette had arrived. Maillard went to find the assistant major-general, and told him that the only way of ending this, was that he, Maillard, should lead the women to Versailles. This journey would give time to assemble the forces. He descended, beat the drum, and obtained a hearing. The stern, tragical, and sombre figure of this man produced a great effect in the Grève; he appeared to be a prudent man, one suited to lead the good cause. The women, who had already set out with the cannons of the Hôtel de Ville, proclaimed him their captain. He placed

himself at their head, with eight or ten drums beating around him, followed by seven or eight thousand women, several hundred armed men, and finally, for a rear guard, a company of volunteers of the Bastille. Arrived at the Tuileries, Maillard wanted to continue along the quay, but the women wished to pass in triumph by the clock, the palace, and the garden. Maillard, a great observer of forms, told them to remember that it was the house and garden of the king, and to cross these without permission, would be an insult to him. He politely approached the Swiss, told him that these ladies desired to pass through, and would not commit the least depredation. The Swiss drew his sword on Maillard, who, in return, drew his. A porteress fortunately struck the Swiss a blow with a stick; he fell; a man placed a bayonet at his throat. Maillard coolly arrested it, and disarmed the two men, carrying away the bayonet and swords.

As the morning advanced, hunger increased. At Chaillot, Auteuil, and Sévres, it was very difficult to restrain the poor famished creatures from stealing food, but Maillard would not allow it. At Sévres the people could go no farther, and

there was nothing, not even to buy; all the doors were shut, except one, that of a sick man who had been left. Maillard obtained from him some jugs of wine, for which he paid. Then he appointed seven men, to assemble the bakers of Sévres, with all that they could bring. There were only eight loaves in all—thirty-two pounds for eight thousand persons; it was devoured, and they dragged themselves on further; fatigue forced the greater part of the women to throw down their arms. Maillard showed them, also, that if they wanted to visit the king and the Assembly, in order to work upon and soften their feelings, they must not arrive with this warlike array; the cannons were placed at the rear, and concealed as much as possible. The wise usher desired an *introduction without scandal*, as was the court phrase; at the entrance of Versailles, in order to testify to their pacific intentions, he gave the signal to the women to sing the air of Henry IV.

The people of Versailles were delighted, and cried, "Vivent nos Parisiennes!" The strangers who were spectators of this, saw only in this crowd the innocent act of coming to ask assistance of the king. A man, who was little in

favor of the Revolution, the Genevese Dumont, was dining at the palace of the Petites-Ecuries, and looking out of the window, said to himself, "This people only ask bread."

The Assembly had been very stormy on this day. The king, not being willing to *sanction* either the Declaration of Rights, or the arrests of the 4th of August, answered that they only had the right to decide upon constitutive laws; nevertheless, he had yielded on the express condition that the executive power should resume its sway under less alarming circumstances.

"If you accept the king's letter," said Robespierre, "there will no longer be a constitution, or any right to have one." Duport, Grégoire, and other deputies, all spoke in the same strain. Petion revived the recollection of the orgies of the *garde du corps*. A deputy, who had himself served among them, asked for their honor, that the denunciation should be formally made out, and the guilty pursued. "I will denounce," said Mirabeau, "and I will sign, if the Assembly declares that the person of the king is *alone* inviolable." This was to designate the queen. The whole Assembly drew back; the motion was

withdrawn; another day it would have provoked a murder.

Mirabeau himself was not without anxiety at the thought of his subterfuges. He approached the president, and whispered to him: "Mounier, Paris is marching against us—believe me, or not, forty thousand men are advancing upon us. You find this bad news; go up to the chateau and let them know it, for there is not a minute to lose." "Paris marching against us?" drily replied the president (he believed that Mirabeau was one of the authors of the movement): "Very well! so much the better! there will be a republic the sooner."

The Assembly decided that they would send to the king to demand the clear and simple acceptance of the Declaration of Rights. At three o'clock, Target announced that a crowd was presenting itself at the gate of the avenue leading from Paris.

Everybody had heard the news, except the king. He was hunting, according to his general custom, and was then in the woods of Meudon. While they were seeking him, the drum was beat, the *gardes du corps*, on horseback and under

arms, were placed in front of the railing; the regiment of Flanders were stationed above them, on their right, near the avenue leading to Sceaux; below them were the dragoons; and behind the railing, the Swiss. In the mean time Maillard had arrived in the National Assembly; all the women wished to accompany him, and he had great trouble in persuading them to choose fifteen of their number to enter. They placed themselves at the barrier, having at their head the French soldier, of whom we have spoken; a woman held a pole, to the end of which was attached a tambourine; and, in the middle, the gigantic usher, whose black dress was torn, holding a sword in his hand. The soldier, with forwardness, commenced a speech, in which he told the Assembly that in the morning, nobody finding any bread at the bakers, he was going to sound the alarm, for which he would assuredly have been hung, but that he owed his safety to the ladies who accompanied him. "We come," continued he, "to demand bread, and the punishment of the *garde du corps* who have dared to insult the cockade. We are good patriots; during our route we have torn down all black

cockades; and I will have the pleasure of tearing one before the eyes of the Assembly."

To which Maillard gravely added: "Every one must adopt the patriotic cockade." At this some murmurs were raised. "And why not, we are all brothers!" said this sinister looking figure.

In this Maillard made an allusion to what the municipality had said the evening before: "That the tri-color cockade had *been adopted as a sign of fraternity*, and was the only one a citizen ought to wear."

The women impatiently cried out, with one voice: "Some bread! some bread!" Maillard then commenced to describe the horrible situation of Paris, the supplies being interrupted by other towns, or by the aristocrats. "They want to starve us," he added. "A miller has received two hundred pounds of wheat on condition of not grinding it, with a promise of giving as much a week!" The Assembly cried out: "Name him! Name him!" Even in the Assembly, Grégoire had spoken of this rumor; Maillard had learnt it on the route.

In reply to the demand of the Assembly, the

women cried out, at a venture: "The Archbishop of Paris."

Robespierre was the first one to do anything. Alone, he supported Maillard; said that the abbé Grégoire had mentioned the fact; and without doubt would procure more certain information.

Other members of the Assembly tried caresses and menaces. A deputy from the clergy, an abbé or prelate, gave his hand to one of the women to kiss. She passionately said: "I was not made to kiss the hand of a dog." Another deputy, decorated with the cross of St. Louis, hearing Maillard say that the great obstacle to the success of the constitution was the clergy, flew into a passion, and said that he ought to be punished instantly as an example. Maillard, without yielding, answered, that he had not named any member of the Assembly, that without doubt the clergy did not know anything about it, and that he was rendering them a service in giving them this advice. Again, a second time, Robespierre supported Maillard, and calmed the excited women. Those without were becoming impatient, and fearful for their orator; a rumor was spread amongst them that he had perished. He came

out and showed himself an instant, but returning immediately to the Assembly, desired them to beg the *garde du corps* to apologize for the insult given to the cockade. The deputies demurred, but Maillard insisted in no measured terms. President Mounier called on him to respect the Assembly; awkwardly adding, that those who wished to be citizens could be so to the extent of their desire. Maillard seized upon this, and replied: "There is no person who ought not to be proud of the name of citizen; and, if there was in this Assembly anybody who would bring dishonor on it, he ought to be excluded." The Assembly trembled, applauded, and cried out: "Yes, we are all citizens."

At this moment a tri-colored cockade was brought in from the *garde du corps*. The women cried out: "*Vive le roi!*" "Long live the gentlemen of the *garde du corps*." Maillard, who was less easily satisfied, insisted on the necessity of sending away the regiment of Flanders.

Mounier, hoping then to be able to disperse them, said that both the Assembly and the king had neglected no means to provide for their sus-

tenance; and that new ways would be sought if they would go in peace.

Maillard would not move, saying: "That does not satisfy us." A deputy then proposed to go and represent to the king the unhappy condition of Paris. The Assembly chose him, and the women, seizing this hope, threw themselves on the necks of the deputies, and embraced the president in spite of all his efforts. "But where is Mirabeau?" said they; "we would like to see our Count of Mirabeau!" Mounier, kissed, surrounded, and almost suffocated, mournfully set out with the deputation, and a crowd of women, who persisted in following him. "We were on foot, in the mud," said he, "and the rain falling heavily. We passed through a crowd who were poorly clad, noisy, and strangely armed." The *garde du corps* were patrolling at full speed. The guards, seeing Mounier and the deputies, followed by this strange cortège who accompanied them by way of doing them honor, thought they saw the chiefs of the insurrection, and wishing to disperse the crowd, rushed in amongst them; the women escaped as they could, and saved themselves in the mud. What must have been the rage of the

people, who thought that with them they were sure of being respected.

According to some witnesses, two women were wounded from sabre cuts. Meanwhile the people did nothing; from three to eight o'clock they remained patient and immovable, except cries and hisses, whenever the hated uniform of the *garde du corps* passed by. One child threw stones.

The king had been found; and had returned from Meudon without hurrying himself in the least. Mounier was at last recognized, and received with twelve women. He spoke to the king of the misery of Paris; and to the ministers, of the demand of the Assembly, who were awaiting the entire acceptation of the Declaration of Rights, and other constitutional articles. The king, meanwhile, was listening to the women with much kindness; the young Louison Chabry had been selected spokeswoman, but, at the sight of the king, her emotion was so great that she could scarcely utter the words, "some bread!" and fell fainting. The king, much touched, assisted her to rise, and when, at her departure, she was going to kiss his hand, he embraced her as if he was her father.

She came out a complete royalist, crying: "*Vive le roi!*" Those who were awaiting her in the square were furious, and said that she had been bribed; she was obliged to turn her pocket inside out, to show that she had no money. The women were putting their garters around her neck in order to strangle her, when she was saved by great exertions. They insisted on her returning to the chateau and obtaining a written order from the king for corn, thus abolishing all obstacles to the provisionment of Paris.

To the demands of the president, the king quietly answered: "Return at 9 o'clock." Nevertheless, Mounier did not leave the chateau, but continued knocking at the door of the council chamber, from hour to hour, until two o'clock in the evening, insisting on an answer. But nothing was decided. The minister of Paris, M. de Saint Priest, had not heard the news until very late. (This shows how sudden and unforeseen was the departure to Versailles.) He proposed that the queen should set out for Rambouillet, and that the king should remain, and resist, or, if it was necessary, contest; the departure alone of the queen would have tranquillized the people, and

dispensed with the necessity of a combat. M. Necker wanted the king to go to Paris, and confide himself to the people, that is to say, that he should be frank, sincere, and accept the Revolution. Louis XVI., without resolving on anything, adjourned the council, in order to consult the queen. She was very ready to set out, on condition of his accompanying her, not being willing to leave a man so irresolute to his own guidance; the name of the king was her armor during the commencement of the civil war.

Saint Priest, about seven o'clock, learned that M. de Lafayette, led by the National Guards, was marching towards Versailles. "We must set out immediately," said he. "The king, at the head of the troops, will pass without difficulty." But it was impossible to decide on anything. The king believed (but was entirely wrong) that if he fled, the Assembly would name the Duke of Orleans king. He disliked, also, the idea of flight, and walked up and down with rapid steps, saying: "A fugitive king! A fugitive king!" The queen meanwhile insisting upon their departure, carriages were ordered, but it was too late. A militiaman of Paris, who had been chosen by a

troop of women, in spite of himself, as their chief, and who, excited by the march, became at Versailles more violent than all the others, ventured to pass behind the *gardes du corps;* then, seeing the gate shut, he commenced using irritating language to the sentry stationed inside, and threatened him with his bayonet.

A lieutenant of the *gardes* and two others drew their sabres, and galloping up, gave him chase. The man running swiftly, in his desire to gain the barracks, stumbled against a cask, and fell, all the time crying for help. The officer had reached him, when the National Guards of Versailles, being no longer able to restrain themselves, one of them, a wine merchant, rushed from the ranks, levelled, fired, and disabled the arm which held aloft the sabre.

D'Estaing, the commander of the National Guard, was at the chateau, preparing to set out with the king. Leconitre, the lieutenant-colonel, remained in the square, asking orders of the municipality, who did not give any. He feared, and with reason, that this famished crowd would sack the city, and supply themselves. He went to them and asked what provision they needed; he

then entreated the municipality, but could only obtain a little rice, which was nothing among so many. He then inquired among them, and managed to soothe the people by his praiseworthy exertions. At the same time he addressed the regiment of Flanders, asking both the officers and men, if they would fire. But they had already been subjected to a much more powerful influence. The women had mingled among them, imploring them not to harm the people. One of them, whom we will soon see again, appeared at this time; she does not seem to have walked in the mud, as the others, but came later, and threw herself suddenly on the soldiers. It was the pretty Mademoiselle Théroigne de Méricourt, a Leigoise, excitable and easily carried away, like her countrywomen who took so prominent a part in the revolutions of the fifteenth century, and fought so valiantly against Charles the Bold. Striking, original, and strange looking, with her amazon hat, red coat, and sword at her side, talking in the same breath French and Leigois, yet with much eloquence, she excited their laughter, and they yielded. Impetuous, charming, and terrible, she felt no obstacle. Théroigne had invaded

this poor Flanders regiment, turned their heads, conquered and disarmed them so well, that they fraternally yielded their cartridge-boxes to the National Guards of Versailles.

D'Estaing then commanded them to retire. Some went, but others answered that they would not go unless the *gardes du corps* went first. An order was given to the guards to move off. It was eight o'clock, and the night was dark; they were followed with hisses. With their sabres in their hands, they made a way through them. Those who were at the end, being more surrounded than the others, fired their pistols; three of the National Guards were wounded, one on the cheek, two others receiving the balls in their clothes. Their comrades fired back. The *gardes du corps* upon this replied with their carbines. Others of the National Guard entered the court-yard, and surrounded D'Estaing, demanding ammunition. He was much astonished at this outburst, and at the boldness they showed entirely alone in the midst of the troops. "True martyrs of enthusiasm," as he afterwards said to the queen. A lieutenant of Versailles declared to the guard of the artillery, that if they would not give him

powder he would blow their brains out. A cask was given them, the head was immediately knocked out in the square, the cannon loaded and pointed opposite the ramparts, in order to attack in the flank the troops who still surrounded the chateau, and the *garde du corps* who were returning to the square.

The people of Versailles had shown the same firmness on the other side of the chateau. Five carriages advanced to the gate. It was the queen, they said, who was going to Trianon. The Swiss opened the gates, but the guard closed it. "It would be dangerous," said the commander, "for her majesty to go so far from the chateau." The carriages were forced to return under escort. There were no means of escape; the king was a prisoner.

The same commander saved a body-guard whom the crowd were ready to cut in pieces, for having fired on the people. He succeeded so well, that they let the man go; satisfying themselves with his horse, which they cut up to be roasted in the square, but the crowd were too hungry, and it was devoured half raw.

The rain fell, and the crowd sheltered them-

selves as well as they could. Some of them forced the gate of the Grandes-Ecuries, where the Flanders regiment was, and mingled *pêle mêle* with the soldiers. The others, to the number of about four thousand, had remained in the Assembly. The men were tranquil enough, but the women endured with impatience this season of inaction; they talked, cried, and walked about; Maillard alone was able to silence them, and he was almost exhausted haranguing the Assembly.

One thing, which did not aid in calming the crowd, was the *garde du corps* coming to the dragoons, who were at the doors of the Assembly, and asking them if they would aid in taking the cannons which were pointed at the chateau. The people were going to throw themselves upon them, but the dragoons enabled them to escape. At eight o'clock, there was another effort made; a letter was brought from the king, which, without naming the Declaration of Rights, vaguely promised the free circulation of grain. It is probable that, at this moment, the idea of flight was dominant at the chateau. Without returning any answer to Mounier, who had been waiting at the door of the council, they sent the letter, in

order to occupy the crowd who were impatient outside.

A singular apparition also added to the fright of the Court. A young man from the people entered, badly dressed, and very pale; they were astonished to find, under this disguise, the Duke de Richelieu, who had mingled among the last crowd of people who had set out from Paris; he left them half way, in order to hasten on and warn the royal family of the danger which menaced them; for he had heard proposals, and atrocious menaces, horrible enough to make their hair stand on end. In saying this, he became so pale, that every body trembled.

The heart of the king commenced to fail him; he felt that the queen was in peril. Notwithstanding all it cost his conscience to sanction the false philosophy of the legislative work, at ten o'clock he signed the Declaration of Rights.

Mounier could then leave his post. He hastened to resume his presidency before the arrival of this great army from Paris, whose projects he did not yet know. He entered, but there was no longer an Assembly; the members had dispersed; the crowd, more and more noisy and exacting, had

demanded that the price of meat, as well as bread, should be lowered. Mounier found in his place, seated in the president's chair, a tall woman of good manners, who held the bell, and descended with reluctance. He gave orders that the deputies should be recalled; in the meanwhile, he announced to the people that the king had accepted the constitutional articles. The women pressed around him, some demanding copies of the Declaration; others saying: "But, Monsieur le President, will this be any advantage to us? Will this give bread to the poor people of Paris?" Others said: "We are very hungry; we have eaten nothing all day." Mounier sent to get bread from the bakers; and, on all sides, the supplies were brought in, which the people devoured in the hall, making a great uproar.

Whilst the women were eating, they continued to talk with Mounier: "But, my dear President, why have you defended this villanous veto? Take care of the *lanterne!*" Mounier answered them with firmness, that they were not fit to judge, and they were mistaken; that he loved better to expose his life than betray his conscience. This answer pleased them very much; and from

that time they showed him much kindness and respect. Mirabeau was alone able to make himself heard, to calm the tumult; but he was too anxious to pay any attention to them. Many witness, that, in the evening, he had marched up and down among the people with a large sword, saying to those whom he met: "My children, we are for you!" Then, he retired to bed. Dumont the Genevese went to seek him, and brought him back to the Assembly. As soon as he arrived, he said, in his thundering voice: "I would like to know by what right our sittings are disturbed. Monsieur le President, make our Assembly to be respected!" The women cried out, "bravo!" There was a little calm; and, to fill up the time, the discussion of the criminal laws was recommenced. I was in the gallery (says Dumont), where a fish-woman was exciting and directing with supreme authority, about a hundred women, principally young girls, who, at her signal, would cry out, or hold their peace. She addressed the deputies familiarly by their names, or else asking: "Who is that talking down there? Make that chatterer hold his tongue! we have nothing to do with that! we want bread!" All the others were cry-

ing: "Notre petite mère, Mirabeau!" But Mirabeau would not speak.

M. de Lafayette, who had left Paris between five and six o'clock, did not arrive till past midnight. We must retrace our steps, and follow him from noon to that time. About eleven o'clock, hearing of the invasion of the Hôtel de Ville, he went there, and finding that the crowd had gone, he dictated a dispatch for the king. The National Guard, paid and unpaid, occupied the Grève; and from rank to rank the cry was heard that they must go to Versailles. Lafayette, notwithstanding all he could say or do, was forced to accompany them.

The inhabitants of the chateau were in the greatest anxiety. They believed that Lafayette pretended that he had been forced, and would profit by the circumstance.

About eleven o'clock, they again attempted, the crowd having dispersed, to obtain a passage for the carriages at the gate of the Dragon; but the National Guard of Versailles were on the watch, and had closed the outlet.

The queen, besides, did not want to set out alone. She judged, and with reason, that there would be

no safety for her if she was separated from the king. About two hundred gentlemen, of whom several were deputies, offered themselves in her defence, and asked an order from her to obtain the horses from the stables. She authorized them, in the case, she said, where the king would be in danger. Lafayette, before entering Versailles, swore again an oath of fidelity to the law and king. His arrival was made known to the latter, who answered that he would see him with pleasure, and was ready to accept *his* Declaration of Rights.

Lafayette entered the chateau entirely alone, to the great astonishment of the guard, and everybody else. A courtier, who was standing in the Œil de Bœuf, foolishly remarked: "Behold Cromwell." Lafayette quickly answered: "Sir, Cromwell would not have entered alone."

The king placed the exterior posts of the chateau under the command of the National Guard; whilst the *garde du corps* kept those within. Even those outside were not entirely confided to the control of Lafayette. One of his patrols wishing to enter the Park, was refused permission. The Park was occupied by the *garde du*

corps and other troops, who, until two o'clock in the morning, were waiting the movements of the king, in case flight should be determined on. At last, at two o'clock, the king being tranquillized by Lafayette, it was told them they could go to Rambouillet. At three o'clock, the Assembly broke up. The people had dispersed, trying to sleep, as well as they could, in the churches and elsewhere. Maillard, and many women, amongst whom was Louison Chabry, had set out for Paris, a little after the arrival of Lafayette, carrying with them the decrees on the grain, and the Declaration of Rights.

Lafayette had much trouble in obtaining lodging for his soldiers; wet, and worn out with fatigue, they were seeking some place to dry themselves, and something to eat. He himself at last, believing all tranquil, went to the Hôtel de Noailles, and slept as one sleeps who had endured twenty hours of fatigue and agitation.

But there were many people who did not sleep. These especially were those who had set out the evening before from Paris, and had not endured the fatigue of the preceding day. The first expedition, where women ruled, simple and spon-

taneous, and which may be said to have been determined by want, had as yet cost no blood. Maillard had had the glory of preserving some order even amongst disorder. The natural *crescendo* which is always observed in such movements, would scarcely allow any person to think that the second expedition would pass in the same manner. It is true, it was carried on under the eyes of the National Guard, and almost in concert with them. Nevertheless, there were men who were decided on creating a disturbance without them; several of the most excited fanatics would have wished to kill the queen. At last, about six o'clock in the morning, the people of Paris, and the most bitter of those of Versailles, forced the royal apartments, in spite of the *gardes du corps*, who killed five men of the people; and, in return, seven of their number were massacred. The queen was in great danger, and only escaped by running to the chamber of the king; she was saved by Lafayette, who hastened in time with the French guards. When the king appeared on the balcony, the people cried out: "The king to Paris!"

The queen was forced to appear; Lafayette

accompanied her, and, as if going in her peril, kissed her hand. The people, surprised and touched, saw only the wife and mother, and applauded.

It was a singular thing, that politicians and men of sense, particularly those who wished to make the Duke of Orleans lieutenant-general, were much opposed to the king's going to Paris. They thought that it would afford Louis XVI. a chance of reinstating himself in popular opinion. If the queen had fled, been killed, or had not followed him, the Parisians would, very probably, have resumed their former love for the king. They had always had a weakness for this fat man, who was not wicked, and in his *embonpoint* had an air of paternal good nature, which pleased the crowd. We have seen that the market women called him *the good papa*, and this was the feeling of the people.

The king had appointed the Assembly to meet at the chateau. Only forty deputies answered the call. The greater part were undecided, and had remained in the hall. The people, who filled the tribunes, determined their indecision; and at the first intimation of a session at the cha-

teau, they uttered furious exclamations. Mirabeau then arose, and, according to his habit of concealing his proud language under deference to the people, said: "That the liberty of the Assembly would be compromised if it deliberated in the palace of kings; that it would lower its dignity in leaving the place of its sittings, when a deputation would suffice." The young Barnave supported this proposition. The President Mounier disapproved of it in vain.

At last, they learned that the king had consented to set out for Paris; the Assembly, at the proposition of Mirabeau, decided that, during the actual session, they were inseparable from the king.

The day was advancing. It was almost one o'clock; they must set out, and leave Versailles. Adieu to the ancient monarchy!

A hundred deputies surrounded the king; all an army; all a people. They were going from the palace of Louis XIV. never to return to it.

All the crowd were moving towards Paris, before and behind the king. Men and women go as they could, on foot, on horseback, in hacks, on all the carts they could find, and on the carriages

of the cannons. They fortunately met with a large supply of grain, a good thing for a famished city. Women carried large loaves of bread on pikes; others had branches of poplar, already yellowed by October. They were very joyous and amiable in their way, saving some jests addressed to the queen. "We are conducting," they cried, "the baker, the baker's wife, and the little journeyman." They all thought they were safe from famine, if they had the king amongst them. Then they were all royalists, and very joyful at placing *ce bon papa* in good hands; he was not very wise or eloquent; but that was the fault of his wife; but, once in Paris, he could not fail of finding plenty of wise women to give him better counsel.

They were gay, sad, violent, joyous, and mournful at the same time. They hoped, but the heavens did not look kindly on them. The weather unfortunately did not regard the fête favorably. It was pouring down rain; they were marching slowly, in deep mud. From time to time several, in rejoicing, discharged their arms.

The royal carriage, guarded by Lafayette at the door, advanced as if it had been a hearse.

The queen was anxious; was it certain that she would arrive safely? She asked Lafayette what he thought of it; he asked Moreau de Méry, who had been President of the Hôtel de Ville during the famous days of the Bastille. He significantly answered: "I question whether the queen will reach the Tuileries alone; but, once at the Hôtel de Ville, she will return."

Behold the king in Paris, the place where he ought to be, in the heart of France. Let us hope he will be worthy of it.

The revolution of the 6th October was necessary, natural, and lawful; if it was sudden, unforeseen, and truly popular, it belonged especially to women, as that of the 14th July to men. Men took the Bastille, and women took the king.

On the first of October, all was spoiled by the ladies of Versailles; on the sixth, all was repaired by the women of Paris.

CHAPTER VI.

WOMEN OF THE CONFEDERATION. (1790.)

"THUS ended the best day of our life." This line, written by the *fédérés* of a village, at the end of their proces-verbal, on the evening of this great national fête, I was tempted to write myself, when, in 1847, I finished the History of the Confederation. There has nothing ever been seen like it. I have had my part in this world, since when, from the first, I had the happiness of recalling the acts, of reproducing in my recitals, these great productions of the people.

The confederations of provinces, departments, towns, and villages, were obliged to record and narrate their own history. They wrote to their mother, the National Assembly, faithfully and naïvely, often very coarsely and childishly; they said what they could; and those who knew how to write, wrote. The skilful scribe was not often

to be found in the country who was worthy of consigning these things to futurity. But good will supplies all deficiencies. True monuments of a new-born fraternity, rude but spontaneous acts, inspired of France, you will remain forever to testify to the joy which filled the hearts of our fathers, when, for the first time, they saw the face, thrice beloved, of their country.

I found these papers, which so few people had read, full and ardent, as of yesterday, when I opened them at the end of sixty years. I felt a strange sensation which could not be mistaken. These enthusiastic recitals, addressed to their country (represented by the Assembly), are love-letters. There is nothing official and commanding. The heart visibly speaks in them. Art, rhetoric, and declamation are not to be found here; there is an entire absence of affectation; it is the embarrassment of the young man, who, not knowing how to express the depth of his feelings, and in default of words, employs those of a novel, to express a true love. But, from time to time, a word forced from a heart which protests against this weak language, shows the real depth of feeling. All these words! Oh! in these moments,

how could they ever end? How could they satisfy themselves? They have been much occupied by the mechanical detail; no writing is so beautiful, no paper is so magnificent, without speaking of the splendid tri-colored ribbons which tie these papers together. When I first saw them, brilliant and so little faded, I called to mind what Rousseau had told of the care he took in writing, embellishing, and adorning the manuscripts of his Julie. Other objects were but the thoughts, cares, and anxieties of our fathers, when, from trivial passing things, their mind was raised to this eternal beauty.

In these first essays in a new faith, all old things, all the formerly so venerated signs and symbols of the past, faded or entirely disappeared. For example, what remained of the ceremonies of the ancient worship, was called upon to sanction these fêtes; they were felt to be but an accessory. It was in those immense reunions that the people of all classes and communions had but one heart, and sacrificed at one altar. No especial worship lends sanctity to holy things amongst men, for men are brothers before God.

All the old symbols have faded, and the new

ones they tried had little signification. Whether they swore on the old altar, before the Holy Sacrament, or before the cold abstract image of Liberty, the true symbol was found elsewhere. The beauty, the grandeur, the eternal charm of these fêtes was, that there was a living symbol.

This symbol for man, is man! The conventual world was crumbling, and a holy respect for the true image of God returned to it. He did not take himself to be God; no such vain pride. It was not as a conqueror or a ruler that man appears here, but in more serious and touching conditions. The noble relations of family, nature, and country were sufficient to give these fêtes a touching and religious interest.

Everywhere the old man was found sitting in the first place, far above the crowd. He was surrounded with young girls, as with a crown of flowers. In all these fêtes the peaceful squadrons were clothed in white robes, with a national belt (that is to say tri-colored). Here, we see one of them uttering noble, charming words, which will make heroes to-morrow. Elsewhere (in the civic procession of the *Romans* in Dauphiny), a beautiful girl marched at their head, holding a palm in

her hand, with this inscription: *To the best citizen!* Many returned home thoughtful.

Dauphiny, that thoughtful and valiant province, which opened the Revolution, formed its towns and villages into several confederations. The rival communes on the frontier, near Savoy, at two steps from the emigrants, laboring with their arms in the field, gave the most splendid fêtes. Squadrons of armed children, women, and girls, at Maubec, defiled in good order, with their banners flying at their head, holding and yielding the sword with that graceful vivacity which is only found in French women. I have made mention elsewhere of the heroic commencement of the women and girls of Angers. They wanted to follow the youthful army from Anjou and Brittany, who were going towards Rennes, to take their part in the first crusade for liberty, to nourish the combatants and take care of the wounded. They swore to marry only loyal citizens, to love none but the brave, and to associate their life only with those who devoted theirs to France. They were thus inspired during the outburst of 1788. And now, in the confederations of June and July, 1790, after having surmounted so many

obstacles, none were more moved than they, in these fêtes of victory. During the winter, families had encountered many dangers, in the total loss of all public protection. They embraced in these reassuring reunions the hope of safety. The poor hearts of the women were still troubled, both with the past and future, and their only future was the safety of their country. From written testimonials, we see that they showed more transport, ardor, and impatience, even than men, to take the civic oath. Women are withdrawn from public life; forgetting that they have more right to be there than any person. They play for a higher stake than men; he plays for his life, whilst a woman throws in her child. She has more interest in inquiring into and foreseeing events. In the solitary and sedentary life which the greater part of our women lead, they follow in their anxious thoughts the crises of their country, and the movements of the army. You believe that this woman is seated at her fireside? No, she is in Algeria, sharing the privations and marches of our young soldiers in Africa; she suffers and fights with them. The men, of I do not remember what village, had assembled in a vast building, with the inten-

tion of making an address to the National Assembly. The women drew near and listened, with tears in their eyes, desiring to unite with them. The address was then read to them, and they joined with all their hearts. This union of family and country filled all hearts with a hitherto unknown feeling.

No person was a witness only in these great fêtes; all were actors, men, women, old people, and children; all, from the centenarian to the infant in arms; and this last did more than all.

It was brought a living flower from the flowers of the harvest. Its mother deposited it upon the altar. But it had not only to play the part of a passive, but of an active offering; it was counted as a person, and swore its civic oath by the mouth of its mother. It claimed its dignity as a man, and a Frenchman; it already had a claim on its country; it had entered into hope.

Yes, the child, the future, was the principal actor. The chief magistrate of a community, in Dauphiny, was crowned by an *infant*. It is such a hand that brings happiness. I see them, under the watchful eye of their mother, already armed, full of ardor; give them only two years,

when they will be fifteen and sixteen, and they will set out. 1792 has sounded, and they follow their elders to Jemappes. Others, still younger, and whose arm appears so feeble, are the soldiers of Austerlitz. Their hand has carried happiness; they have fulfilled this great prophecy; they have crowned France! Even at this time, when pale and weak, she sits under this everlasting crown and commands nations.

It was a great and happy generation which was born at such a time, and whose first look fell upon this sublime sight! Infants brought to be blessed at the altar of their country, devoted by their tearful, but resigned and heroic mothers, given by them to France. Ah! born thus, they can never die. You receive, this day, the potion of immortality. Even those amongst you whom history has not named, have not the less filled the world with that nameless spirit, that great common thought, which has spread over the earth.

I do not believe that in any epoch the heart of man has been more enlarged, more vast, than when the distinctions of class, fortune, and party have been forgotten. In villages, especially, where there was neither rich nor poor, noble or

plebeian, the food was equally distributed; the tables were in common. Social divisions and discords had disappeared; enemies were reconciled; opposing sects fraternized, believers, philosophers, Protestants, and Catholics.

At Saint Jean du Gard, near Mais, the priest and pastor embraced at the altar. Catholics brought the Protestants to church; the pastor was seated in the highest place in the choir. The same honors were rendered to the priests by the Protestants, who, placed amongst them in the most honorable places, listened to the sermon of the minister. The religious fraternized even in the place of combat; at the gate of Cevennes, on the tombs of their ancestors who had killed one another, on the funeral piles yet warm. God, reproached so long, was at last justified. Hearts overflowed; prose did not suffice; a poetical eruption could alone express so deep a feeling; the priest made and chanted a hymn to Liberty; the mayor replied in stanzas; his wife, the mother of an amiable family, at the time when she led her children to the altar, burst forth in touching verses.

The almost pontifical part of a woman, of a

worthy mother, ought not to astonish us. Woman is more than a pontiff; she is the symbol of religion.

Later, it was a young and virtuous girl, who, with her virgin hand, drew from the heavens, by a burning glass, the fire which ignited the incense on her country's altar.

The Revolution, returning to nature, to the happy and naïve sentiments of antiquity, did not hesitate in confiding its most sacred functions to woman, who, as the solace of the heart, the soul of the family, the perpetuator of mankind, was herself the living altar.

CHAPTER VII.

THE JACOBIN LADIES. (1790.)

The 6th of October, 1789, the same day that Louis XIV., on leaving Versailles, signed the principal act of the Revolution, the Declaration of Rights, he sent his protest to the King of Spain. He adopted, from that time, the idea of flying to Austria and returning with an army. This project had been recommended by Breteuil, devoted to Austria and to Marie Antoinette, and was brought forward again by the Bishop of Pamiers, who persuaded the king to adopt it, and obtained from him full power for Breteuil to treat with foreign powers; the negotiations were continued by M. Fersen, a Swede, who had been personally much attached to the queen for several years; she had induced him to leave Sweden, and was devoted to him.

To whatever side we turn in 1790, we see a

strong prejudice against the Revolution. If it does not find an energetic strength in societies, it must perish. Simple confederations will not save it from danger. There must be strong societies. They must have Jacobins, societies to watch the authorities and their agents, the plots of the priests and nobles. These societies were forming themselves all over France.

I see, from an unpublished edict of Rouen, that on the 14th of July, 1790, three friends of the Constitution (for it was thus the Jacobins called themselves) met at the house of a rich and influential widow lady in the town, and gave the civic oath into her hands. They thought in Lucan to see Cato and Marcius:—

Junguntur taciti contentique auspice Bruto.

They proudly sent the act of their confederation to the National Assembly, who at the same time received that of the great confederation of Rouen, where appeared the deputies of sixty towns and a half a million of men. The three Jacobins were a priest, the chaplain of a prison, and two surgeons. One of them brought his brother, printer to the king at Rouen. Two children, nephew

and niece of the lady, and two women, coming perhaps from among his customers, or of his family, were added. Cornelia received their eight oaths, and took it afterwards herself.

It was a small but complete society. The lady (widow of a merchant or ship-owner) represented the great commercial fortunes; the printer, that of industry; the surgeons, those of capacity, talent, and experience; the priest, the Revolution itself; he will not be much longer a priest; he it was who wrote the act, the copy, the notification to the National Assembly. He was the agent of the business, as the lady was the centre. This society was complete in him; he was the lawyer, the proctor of this assembly. Priest of the Palace of Justice, chaplain of the prison, confessor of the condemned prisoners; yesterday dependent on the Parliament, to-day a Jacobin, and announcing this to the National Assembly; by his boldness and activity, he was worth three lawyers.

We must not be astonished that a lady should be the centre of the little society. Many very thoughtful women were drawn into these socie-

ties, with all the fervor of their woman's heart, a blind ardor, confused by affection and ideas, and the spirit of proselytism, devoted all the passions of the middle age, to the service of the new faith. Those of whom we speak here, had been sorely tried; there was a Jewish lady who saw all her family converted but herself; having lost her husband, then her infant (by a frightful accident), she seemed to adopt the Revolution in place of all. Rich and alone, she had been easily persuaded by her friends, I suppose, to unite herself to the new system, and invest her fortune in the national funds.

Why did this little society hold its confederation in secret? Because Rouen, in general, seemed too aristocratic; because the great confederation of sixty towns which met there, with its chiefs, MM. d'Estonteville, d'Herbonville, de Sévac, etc., this confederation, besprinkled with nobility, did not seem pure enough for them; and, finally, that they made the 6th, not the 14th July, sacred to the taking of the Bastille. Then, on the 14th, this proudly isolated company, far from the heated and profane, kept the sacred day. They did not wish

to mingle with the rest; in several respects they were a select body, as were, for the most part, the first Jacobins; a kind of aristocracy of money, talent, and energy, naturally joined to the aristocracy of birth.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PALAIS ROYAL IN 1790—THE FREEDOM OF WOMEN—THE JACOBIN CAVE.

The right of women to equality, their influence in political power, was claimed in 1790 by two men, unlike in every respect; one, an eloquent speaker, with a bold and romantic mind; the other, grave, and the most powerful man of the time. We must again carry the reader into the heat of the contest.

Let us return to the Palais Royal, the place where the Revolution commenced on the 12th July, at the Circus, which then occupied the middle of the garden. Passing by this excited crowd, these noisy groups, these swarms of women devoted to the liberty of nature, we cross a narrow avenue of trees, choked and encumbered with underwood; by this dark passage, we descend fifteen steps, and we are in the middle of the Circus.

There is preaching! What is to be expected in this place, in a reunion so worldly, with its mingling of equivocal pretty women? At the first glance, we would say it was a sermon to young girls. But no, the assembly is a graver one. I recognize a number of literary men, of academicians; at the foot of the tribune is seated M. de Condorcet.

Is the orator a priest? Judging from his dress, yes; he was a handsome man, of about forty, with an excited, violent, and sometimes dry speech; he had no unction, a fearless and slightly visionary countenance. Preacher, poet, or prophet, no matter, it was the abbé Fauchet. This Saint Paul was talking between two Theclas; one of them never left him, following him, *bon gré, mal gré*, to the club and to the altar, so great was her fervor; the other lady was Madam Palm Ælder, a Hollander, who, with a kind heart and noble mind, was the orator of women, preaching their emancipation.

These vague aspirations took a fixed, decided form, in the learned dissertations of the illustrious secretary of the Academy of Sciences, Condorcet; who, on the 3d July, 1790, wrote with clearness a

demand for the admission of women to the rights of citizens. To the friend of Voltaire, the last of the philosophers of the eighteenth century, can lawfully be added the title of being among the precursors of Socialism.

But if we want to see women in the height of their political action, we must leave the Palais Royal, and advance a little further in the street St. Honoré. The brilliant association of Jacobins at this epoch, which counted a crowd of nobles and all the literary men of the time, occupied a church of the old monks, and, a kind of well-lighted crypt, under the church, gave an asylum to a fraternal society of workmen, to whom at certain hours the Jacobins explained the Constitution. In the questions of sustenance or of public danger, these workmen did not come alone; anxious wives and mothers, driven by domestic sufferings, and the wants of their children, accompanied their husbands, in order to learn the evils and remedies of their situation. Several unmarried women, or those whose husbands were working at the time, came and disputed alone. First and touching origin of the society of women.

Who suffered more than they during the Re-

volution? Who found the months and years longest? From this time they became more excited than the men. Marat was very well satisfied with them (30th December, '90); he found pleasure in contrasting the energy of these women of the people, in their subterranean hall, with the unfruitful talking of the Jacobin Assembly, who were chattering above them.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SALONS—MADAME DE STAËL.

The genius of Madame de Staël has been successively swayed by two masters and two ideas, in 1789 by Rousseau, and afterwards by Montesquieu.

In 1789 she was twenty-three years old, and was exercising an all-powerful influence over Necker, her father, whom she passionately loved, and governed by enthusiasm. If it had not been for his zealous daughter, the Genevese banker would never have advanced so far in the revolutionary road. She was full of fire and confidence, and had a firm belief in the good sense of mankind. She had not yet been influenced and weakened by the mediocre lovers who afterwards surrounded her. Madame de Staël has always been guided by love; that which she entertained for her father required that Necker

should have been the first of men, and, at one time, his mind was elevated by faith. We do not doubt that it was owing to the inspiration of his daughter, that he entered so warmly into the bold experiment of universal suffrage, a hazardous measure in a great empire, and amongst a people so little prepared; a measure entirely contrary to his character, and which little conformed to the doctrines which he held both before and after.

The father and daughter, soon frightened by their boldness, were not slow in drawing back. Madame de Staël, surrounded by Feuillants, Anglo-manians, and herself an ardent admirer of England, of which, in reality, she knew nothing, became, and remained the brilliant, eloquent, yet notwithstanding, on the whole, a person of but middling capacity, if we dare say so, of one who has obtained so much renown.

We do not hesitate to affirm that her great originality was in the commencement of her life; her glory was in her love for her father, and in the boldness which she gave him. Her mediocrity was in that of her spiritual lovers, the Narbonnes and Benjamin Constants, who, swayed by

her in her *salon*, did not the less react on her in the intimacy.

Let us take the father and daughter from the commencement.

M. Necker, a Genevese banker, had married a young Swiss lady, a governess, whose only fault was unlimited perfection. The daughter was overwhelmed by the stiffness of her mother, which formed so great a contrast with her own easy, expansive, and versatile nature. Her father, who consoled and admired her, became the object of her adoration. It is related that M. Necker having several times praised Gibbon, then an old man, the young girl wanted to marry him. This child, already the confidant and almost wife of her father, received *pêle-mêle* the faults and qualities of those around her; she was eloquent, pompous, yet full of sensibility and pathos. When Necker published his famous *Compte Rendu*, which has been so variously criticised, one day an eloquent and enthusiastic vindication of it was shown him; the father could not mistake the teaching of his heart; he recognized his daughter. She was then sixteen years old.

She loved her father as a man, admired him as

a writer, and venerated him as the ideal of a citizen, philosopher, sage, and statesman. She would have nothing to do with any but those who held up Necker as a kind of god: it was a weakness, too touching, virtuous, and naïve, to ridicule. When Necker, on the day of his triumphal entrance into Paris, appeared on the balcony of the Hôtel de Ville, between his wife and daughter, the latter, overcome by the depth of her feelings, fainted from happiness.

In proportion to her talent, she possessed very warm feelings; after the flight of her father, and the loss of her first hopes, leaving Rousseau, with his prudent constitutional theories, she turned to Montesquieu, and adopted his romantic love: she wanted a hero to love. Her husband, the honest and cold M. de Staël, the Swedish ambassador, did not answer her idea of the ideal. Not finding any heroes to love, she counted on the powerful and ardent inspiration which was in her, and undertook to make one.

She found a handsome man, a brave and witty *roué*, M. de Narbonne. Whether he was possessed of good parts or not, she was satisfied with his heart. She loved him more especially for the

heroic qualities which she believed him to possess. It must also be said that she loved him (for she was but a woman), for his boldness and foppery. He enjoyed but a poor reputation with the court, and many of the *salons*. He was in fact a great lord, graceful and eloquent, but looked upon with coldness by his relations, and of an equivocal stability. Women were much excited by the whisper that he was the fruit of a *liaison* between Louis XV. and his daughter. The thing was not unlikely. After the Jesuit party drove out Voltaire, and the Voltairian ministers (Argenson, and especially Machault, who spoke too often of the property of the clergy), they wanted to find some means of annulling the power of La Pompadour, protectress of these innovators. A lively and excitable daughter of the king, Polonais, like her mother, devoted herself, another Judith, to this heroic work, sanctified by the end. She was violent, and passionate, devotedly attached to music, in which she had been instructed by the but little scrupulous Beaumarchais. She governed her father, for some time, in the face of La Pompadour. The result, according to tradition, was this handsome, lively

man, a little brazen, and who had from his birth an amiable villany in troubling the peace of women.

Madame de Staël had no beauty; her features were large, especially her nose. She was of middling height, and her complexion but little attractive. Her gestures were rather energetic than graceful, standing before a chimney-piece, with her hands behind her back, she commanded a *salon*, by her masculine attitude, and powerful words, which strongly contrasted with the tone of her sex, and often made one doubt if she was a woman. She was then but twenty-six years old; she had a beautiful arm, and a neck like Juno, magnificent black hair, which, falling in heavy ringlets, gave great effect to her bust, and even made her features appear more delicate, or rather less masculine. But what drew the attention of all, and made her other defects to be forgotten, were her singular eyes, black and filled with light, sparkling with genius, goodness, and all the passions. Her look was a world: generosity and goodness could be read there. Even an enemy could not listen to her a moment, without

saying, in spite of himself: "Oh! what a good, noble, and excellent woman!"

Let us take back, however, the sacred word, genius. Madame de Staël had, in truth, immense talent, whose source was in the heart. Great originality and invention were never found in her. She possessed from her birth great original discord of qualities, not to the extent of the brusqueness of her father Necker, but which neutralized, in a considerable degree, her powers, and restrained her from elevating herself above mere declamation. The Neckers were rich *bourgeois* Germans, established in Switzerland. German, Swiss, and a *bourgeois*, Madame de Staël had a something not heavy, but strong, coarse, not refined. There was the difference of iron and steel between her and her master Jean Jacques.

It was because she remained a bourgeois, in spite of her talent, fortune, and noble confidants, that she had a weakness for great lords. She did not allow her good and excellent heart to take a flight, which would have placed her entirely on the side of the people. Her judgments and opinions were strong against them. Upon the whole she had faults. She especially admired England,

which she believed to be very aristocratic; revered the English nobility, ignorant that it was but of recent origin, knowing but little of those whom she talked about incessantly, and little suspecting the mechanism by which England, drawing constantly from below, was continually making nobles; but no people know better how to make the best of the old.

It was the great dreamer and fascinator of the world, love, which imposed upon this impassioned woman the belief, that it was possible to place this young *roué* officer, without any stability, lively and frivolous, at the head of so great a movement. The gigantic sword of the Revolution had passed, as a gage *d'amour*, from a woman to a young coxcomb! The idea was ridiculous. What made it more so was, that she pretended to perform this hazardous action within the prudent limits of a political, bastard, half English liberty, in connection with the Feuillants, a contracted faction, and with Lafayette, almost as contracted, so that this folly did not even possess boldness, a thing which generally makes folly successful.

Robespierre and the Jacobins gratuitously sup-

posed that Narbonne and Madame de Staël were intimately connected with Brissot and the Girondists, and that both were influencing the court in order to precipitate France in war, which war would lead to a counter revolution.

All this was false. It has been proved that, on the contrary, the Girondists detested Madame de Staël, and the court hated Narbonne, and shuddered at the venturous project of the war in which they would be thrown. Madame de Staël thought, and with reason, that at the first blow, accused of treason, she would be placed in a position of great peril; that Narbonne and Lafayette could not stand a moment, and that the Girondists would take from them the sword, as yet but half-drawn, to turn it against the king.

"You see," said Robespierre, "that the plan of this treacherous war, by which we are to be given up to the kings of Europe, emanates from the Swedish ambassador." That was to suppose that Madame de Staël was in truth the wife of her husband; that she negotiated for M de Staël following the directions of his court; it was a ridiculous idea, when her distracted love for Narbonne was so publicly shown. Poor Corinne, *hélas!* was

then twenty-five years old, imprudent, excitable, and generous; she was a hundred leagues distant from all thought of political treason. Those who knew her nature, age, and passions, could understand better than the too subtle logician, that this sorrowful and immoral affair was but too real; she was negotiating for her lover, and not for her husband. She was in haste to make the former famous in the revolutionary crusade, and cared little if the blow fell on the noble master of the ambassador of Sweden.

The 11th of January, Narbonne, by dint of rapid travelling, having examined the frontier, reported to the Assembly. It was a true courtier's report. Either from haste, or ignorance, he gave a splendid picture of our military position, making the number of troops enormous; there were exaggerations of all kinds, which were afterwards completely destroyed by Dumourier's report.

The fall of M. de Narbonne, caused by the Girondists, suddenly rendered Madame de Staël a zealous royalist. She wrote out a plan of escape for the royal family; but she wanted her hero, Narbonne, to have the honor of it. The court were afraid to trust themselves in such frivolous

hands. During the Reign of Terror, she took refuge in Switzerland; but she suddenly changed in 1796, and, after Thermidor, became a blind partisan of the reaction, supporting the Directory by indirectly taking part in the *coup d'état* which saved the Republic.

Bonaparte hated her, believing that she aided Necker in his last works, which were contrary to his policy. He could not have found a better means of disparaging her than saying that she had made I do not know what declaration of love to him; there was little probability in this, as at the time she was devoted to Benjamin Constant, whom she was thrusting forward in opposition to Bonaparte.

The ridiculous persecutions of the master of Europe, the exile of Madame de Staël, the seizure of her *Germany*, and the strange proposals which were several times made to her, are well known. When Bonaparte was consul, he offered to reimburse to her the two millions, lent in 1789 by Necker, and, later, he asked her to write for the King of Rome.

In 1812, she was obliged to fly to Austria, Russia, and Sweden. When she wrote the *Ten*

Years of Exile, she had no country. In 1810, she married M. de Rocca, a sick and wounded officer, twenty-one years younger than herself. She died in 1817.

On the whole, she was an excellent woman, with a kind heart, and great talent, and perhaps, without the salons, the mediocral friendships, the miseries of the writing and talking world, she would have had genius.

CHAPTER X.

THE SALONS—MADAME DE CONDORCET.

Almost opposite the Tuileries, in sight of the Flora pavilion and the royalist salon of Madame de Lamballe, is the palace of La Monnaie. Here was another salon—that of M. de Condorcet—which a contemporary has denominated the hearth of the republic.

In this European salon of the illustrious secretary of the Academy of Sciences, were seen collected, from all parts of the world, the republican opinions of the time. Here they worked, took a form, and produced their laws. We have seen that, from 1789, the introduction and first idea belonged to Camille Desmoulins. In June, 1791, Bonneville and the Cordeliers raised the first cry.

The last of the philosophers of the great eighteenth century, the one who survived the others long enough to see their theories appear

in the field of reality, was M. de Condorcet, secretary of the Academy of Sciences, the successor of d'Alembert, the last correspondent of Voltaire, and the friend of Turgot. His salon was the common centre of thinking Europe; every nation, as well as every science, was represented there. All distinguished strangers, after reading the theories of France, came to his salon to seek and discuss the application of them. Among them was the American Thomas Payne, the English Williams, the Scotch Mackintosh, the Genevese Dumont, and the German Anacharsis Clootz; this last, did not harmonize with such an assembly, but in 1791, all went there, and were as one. Immovable, in a corner, was the constant friend, Doctor Cabanis, sick and melancholy, who had brought to this house the tender and deep attachment which he had entertained for Mirabeau.

Above these illustrious thinkers soared the noble and chaste face of Madame de Condorcet, whom Raphaël would have chosen as a type of the ideal. She was all light; she seemed to illuminate and purify everything around her. She had been a canoness, and appeared still less a

lady than a noble young girl. She was then twenty-seven years old (twenty-two years younger than her husband). She had just finished her *Letters on Sympathy*, a book of fine and delicate analysis, where, under the veil of extreme reserve, may often be perceived the melancholy of a young heart which still wants something.*

It has been erroneously supposed that she was ambitious of the honor and favor of the court, and that her chagrin turned her to the Revolution. Nothing could have been farther from such a character.

What is still less unlikely, is the report, that before marrying Condorcet, she had declared to him that her heart was not free; that she loved,

* This touching little book, written before and published after the Revolution in 1798, partakes of the two epochs. The letters are addressed to Cabanis, the brother-in-law of the amiable authoress, and the inconsolable friend and confidant of the deep wound. They were finished in this desolate Elysée d'Auteuil, full of regrets, and loved shadows. These letters spoke mildly; the sourdine is placed on delicate cords. However, in so great a reserve, it is not easy to distinguish amongst the allusions, what were the first sorrows of the young girl, or the regrets of the widow. Was it to Condorcet, or Cabanis that she addressed this delicate and touching passage, which would have been eloquent, but she arrested herself in time: "The restorer and guide of our happiness"—

but without hope. The philosopher received the news with paternal goodness, and respected it. For two years, so says the story, they lived as two spirits. It was not until 1789, during the happy month of July, that Madame de Condorcet, seeing the impassioned nature of this man, commenced to love the great citizen, this tender and deep soul which sought, as if for its own happiness, the felicity of mankind. She found him young from the lasting youth of this great idea, and beautiful desire. The only child they had was born nine months after the taking of the Bastille, in April, 1790.

Condorcet was then forty-nine years old; his youth seemed to return, under the influence of these great events; he was commencing a new life, the third. He had lived that of a mathematician with d'Alembert, that of a critic with Voltaire, and now he was embarking on the ocean of political life. He had dreamed of it, now he must act, or at least devote himself. The whole of his life showed a remarkable alliance between two faculties rarely united, firm reason and boundless faith in the future. Strongly opposed to Voltaire, when he found him unjust, and a

friend of the Economists, without being blinded by them, he maintained the same independent position towards the Girondists. His defence of Paris against the presumption of the provinces, who took part with the Girondists, is still read with admiration.

This great mind was always collected, watchful, and master of itself. Its door was always open, however deep may have been the work it was doing. In a salon, in a crowd, he was always thinking; his attention was never distracted. He spoke little, heard everything, profited by all, and never forgot. Whatever subject he was interrogated on, he was found to be intimately acquainted with. Women were astonished and affrighted to see how well he knew fashions, from the smallest to the greatest detail. He appeared cold, never disclosing his thoughts; and his friends only learned his friendship, by the great exertions he secretly made to render them service. "He is a volcano concealed by snow," said d'Alembert. It is said, that in his youth, he had loved, and, having no hope, at one time was near committing suicide. Grown older and more staid, yet, in secret he entertained for

his Sophie an immense yet restrained love, this passion, though a late one, was more profound even than life itself, and was impossible to fathom.

Sophie was worthy of it; without speaking of the universal admiration of the men of the time, I shall mention one great and sacred incident. When the unfortunate Condorcet, hunted like a wild beast, hidden in an asylum of little safety, preyed upon himself, and on the thoughts of the present, and wrote his defence, his political testimony, his wife gave him the noble counsel to leave all these vain struggles, to give his memory with confidence to posterity, and peaceably to write the *Esquisse d'un Tableau du progrès de l'Esprit humain.* He listened to her, and wrote this noble book of profound science, unlimited love of man, exalted hope, consoling himself in his approaching death by the most affecting of dreams: that the progress of science enables one to support death!

A noble epoch! and these women, how worthy of being loved and connected by man with the ideal, country and virtue. Who does not remember the sorrowful breakfast, when for the last time the friends of Camille Desmoulins prayed him to

stop his *Vieux Cordelier* and withdraw his demand from the Committee of Clemency? His Lucile, forgetting herself as a wife and a mother, threw her arms around his neck: "Leave him," said she, "leave him to follow his destiny."

Thus they have gloriously sacrificed marriage and love, supporting the wearied brow of man in the presence of death, giving him life and introducing him to immortality.

They will never be forgotten; future generations will always regret having never seen these heroic and charming women. They remain in us, associated with the most noble dreams of the heart, as types and regrets of an eternal love.

The tragic destiny of Condorcet was shadowed forth in his features and expression. With a timid countenance (like that of a *savant* always alone in the midst of men), he had something sad, patient, and resigned. The upper part of his face was very fine; his noble and soft eyes, full of severe thought, seemed to look in the depths of the future; and his vast forehead containing every science, seemed an immense storehouse, a perfect treasure of the past. It must be confessed, that this man was more vast than strong; the

universality of his mind was one cause of its enervation. His mouth was retiring, and effeminate, and weak in expression. Let us also remember, that he had passed his life in the eighteenth century, and still felt its influence. He had passed through all its great and little disputes, and was unhappily surrounded by contradictions. Nephew of a Jesuit bishop, and partly brought up under his care, he also owed much to the patronage of Larochefoucauld. Though poor, he was noble: his title, the Marquis de Condorcet.

By his birth, position and relations, he had many things to attach him to the old *régime*. His house, *salon* and wife, presented the contrast.

Madame de Condorcet, *née* Grouchy, at first a canoness, and an enthusiastic pupil of Rousseau and the Revolution, emerged from her half ecclesiastical position to preside in a *salon* which was the centre of freethinkers, and seemed like a noble devotee of philosophy.

The crisis of the 19th June called on him to declare himself. He had to choose between two ties, the past on one side and his opinions on the other; as for his interests, they were as nothing to such a man. The only one perhaps to which

he was sensible, was, that the Republic in lowering all distinctions of rank, and in proportion, raising natural superiority, would make his Sophie a queen.

M. de Larochefoucauld, his intimate friend, did not despair of neutralizing his republicanism, like that of Lafayette. He thought, in the modest *savant*, the mild and timid man, whose family had formerly guided him, he would gain an easy conquest. It was even declared, and spread among the people, that Condorcet joined in the royalist opinions of Sieyès. They also compromised him, at the same time, by offering him, as a temptation, the prospect of being appointed tutor to the dauphin.

These rumors probably decided him to declare himself sooner than he would otherwise have done. The first of July, he announced in the *Bouche de Fer* that he would deliver a lecture on the republic before the social circle; it was reserved until the 12th, and then given with caution. In an ingenious discourse, he refuted several hackneyed objections which had been made to the republic, at the same time adding these words, which caused

much astonishment: "If, notwithstanding, the people withhold from calling a convention to pronounce if the throne should be continued, if the inheritance for a short number of years is divided between two conventions, *royalty, in this case, is not essentially contrary to the rights of citizens.*" He made allusion also to the rumor which had been circulated, as to his being appointed tutor to the dauphin, and said that, in this case, he would be more likely to teach him how to pass from the throne.

This appearance of indecision did not please the republicans, and offended the royalists. The latter were still more wounded when a pamphlet was circulated over Paris, witty and satirical, though written by so grave a hand. In this, Condorcet was probably the echo and secretary of the young society which frequented his *salon.* The pamphlet was entitled *A Letter from a Young Mechanic*, who, for a moderate sum, engaged to make an excellent constitutional king. "This king," he said, "will admirably perform all the duties of royalty; will walk at ceremonies; will seat itself becomingly; will go to mass; and even,

by means of a certain spring, will take the list of ministers designated by majority from the hands of the President of the Assembly. My king will not be dangerous to liberty; and even, by carefully repairing him, he will be eternal, which is still better than being hereditary. He could even be declared inviolate without injustice, and said to be infallible without absurdity."

It was a remarkable thing, that this grave, middle-aged man, who was embarking a jest on the ocean of the revolution, never hid from himself the dangers by which he would be surrounded. Full of faith for mankind in the far-off future, he had less of it for the present; he did not attempt to conceal from himself his situation; he was fully aware of the dangers which surrounded him. He feared them, not for himself (for he had voluntarily given up his life), but for this adored wife, and young child, born at the sacred moment of July. For several months, he had informed himself secretly of the port by which, if forced to fly, he could enable his family to escape, and he chose that of Saint Valery. All was put off, and the event approached nearer and nearer. It reached

Condorcet; this man, formerly so prudent, became reckless in the height of the Reign of Terror. Author of the plan of the Constitution in '92, he violently attacked the Constitution of '93, and was forced to seek an asylum from proscription.

CHAPTER XI.

FINISHED.—MADAME DE CONDORCET. (1794.)

"Love is as strong as death." And perhaps it was in these times of death it found its triumph; for death adds to love a something sharp, yet dazzling; bitter, yet divine, which is not felt here below. Who has not said a hundred times, whilst reading the fearless travels of Louvet over France in search of his beloved, particularly when reunited by fate in the hiding-place in Paris, or in the cavern on the Jura, they fell fainting, entirely overcome, into each other's arms: "Oh, death, if thou hast the power of increasing a hundredfold, of transfiguring the joys of life at such a time, thou hast truly the keys of heaven!"

Love saved Louvet; but it killed Desmoulins by strengthening him in his heroism; and it was not entirely unconnected with the death of Condorcet.

The 6th of April, 1794, Louvet re-entered Paris, to see Lodoiska; Condorcet left it, in order to diminish the dangers of his Sophie.

At least, this is the only explanation that can be found of the flight of the proscribed, in causing him to leave his asylum.

To believe the report that Condorcet left Paris simply to see the country, attracted by the spring weather, is not only a strange, but improbable and trifling explanation. In order that the reason may be well understood, we must explain the situation of this family.

Madame de Condorcet, the young, beautiful, and virtuous wife of an illustrious proscribed, old enough to be her father, by the seizure and confiscation of her property, was in a state of complete destitution, and neither of them possessed the means of flight. Their friend Cabanis applied to two medical students, who have since become very celebrated, Pinel and Boyer. Condorcet was placed by them in a kind of public house, kept by a woman called Vernet, near the Luxembourg, who took a few boarders; this lady was perfection. A Montagnard, who lodged in the house, was kind and discreet, meeting Condorcet every

day, without appearing to recognize him. Madame de Condorcet lodged in Auteuil, and every day walked to Paris. Notwithstanding that she was embarrassed by the care of a sick sister, an old nurse, and a young infant, she was obliged to toil for her daily bread. In the street St. Honoré, No. 352 (but two steps from Robespierre), a younger brother of Condorcet's secretary, kept a small linen shop for her; in a little room above the shop she took portraits; several of the most influential people of the time went there to have their portraits taken; no business prospered more under the Reign of Terror; all hastened to attach to the canvas a shadow of their uncertain life. The singular attraction which purity and dignity gave to this young woman, drew the attention of the most violent enemies of her husband. What was she not forced to hear? What coarse and cruel words! She was always languishing and weak, exhausted by her deep affliction. Sometimes in the evening, when she dared, with a trembling and broken heart, she would glide in the twilight to the street Servandoni, a dark and damp alley, hidden under the towers of Saint Sulpice. Shuddering with fear at the thought

of meeting anybody, she would ascend with a light step to the miserable retreat of the great man; love and filial love gave Condorcet some hours of joy and happiness. It is useless to mention how she attempted to conceal from him the trials, humiliations, and cruel, barbarous levities of the day; these inflictions to a wounded soul, at the price of which she supported her husband and family, diminishing hatred by patience, softening anger, and perhaps often withholding the suspended sword. But Condorcet was too penetrating not to see through it all; and read very plainly under this sickly smile by which she tried to hide her inward agony, with but a poor concealment, liable at any moment to be lost himself and to lose her, and understanding perfectly all she suffered and risked for him, he felt the most powerful sting of the Reign of Terror. With little buoyancy of disposition, he feared everything; he hated more and more an existence which was compromising one whom he loved better than himself. What had he done to merit this punishment? he had none of the faults of the Girondists; far from being a federalist, he had, in an ingenious book, defended the rights of

Paris, showing the advantage of such a capital as the instrument of centralization. The name of the Republic, the first republican manifesto, had been written at his house, and circulated by his friends, whilst Robespierre, Vergniaud, and Danton were still hesitating. It is true that he had written this first plan of the Constitution in an impracticable and inapplicable manner, the machine of which could never be put in motion, so much was it loaded and overpowered, with guarantees, checks, and shackles, to secure the safety of the individual. The terrible saying of Chabot, that the extolled Constitution of 1793 was only a snare, an easy means of organizing the dictatorship, Condorcet had demonstrated in a violent pamphlet. It has been seen how Chabot, frightened by his own boldness, thought to conciliate Robespierre by causing Condorcet to be exiled.

He who performed this bold act on the morning of the 31st of May, knew well that he was playing for his life. He procured a powerful poison from Cabanis; armed with this, being able at any moment to dispose of his life, he wanted, in his asylum, to continue the controversy, the duel of logic against the knife, to ter-

rify the Reign of Terror with the conquering arms of reason; such was his perfect reliance on this god of the eighteenth century, in his infallible victory for the good sense of mankind. A mild, yet powerful and ruling influence arrested him—the voice of his beloved wife, a suffering flower, left to struggle alone against the violence of the world, exposing herself to it for him, and was equally willing to live and die for him. Madame de Condorcet was asking a great sacrifice; that of his passion, of his vowed combat, that is to say, that of his heart.

She advised him to leave his enemies of the day, this furious world which was passing away, and establish himself above the present; then to take possession of his immortality, and realize his idea of writing *Un Tableau des Progrès de l'Esprit humain;* but great was the effort. It seemed as if there was a total absence of passion, in the sad and austere coldness which the author had assumed. Many of the subjects are elevated, but many are treated with great dryness.* Time

* This dryness was only on the outside. This is felt on reading in his last words to his daughter, the long and tender advice he gave her to love and spare animals, and the sadness

was advancing; who knew whether there would be a to-morrow? The solitary one, under his frozen roof, seeing from his skylight but the tops of the trees of the Luxembourg, stripped of their foliage, in the winter of 1793, was hastening his bitter work, day by day, and night by night, happy in saying, at each leaf and section of his history: "Another age of the world yielding to death."

By the end of March, he had reviewed, collected, and consecrated every century and age; the vitality of the sciences, their everlasting powers, appeared in his book and in himself. What is history and science? A struggle against death. The vehement aspirations of a great immortal soul, in order to communicate immortality, carries away the sage to make his vow in this prophetic form: "Science will have conquered death, and then, none will die."

A sublime defiance to the reign of death, by which he was surrounded. Noble and touching vengeance! His soul having taken refuge in the future happiness of mankind, in his boundless

which he expresses at the severe law obliging them to prey upon each other.

hopes, and saved by the future good, Condorcet, the 6th of April, the last line being finished, drew his woollen cap over his brow, and, in his working dress, early in the morning, crossed the sill of good Madame Vernet. She had guessed his project, and watched him; but he escaped by stratagem. In one pocket he had his faithful friend, his liberator; in the other, the Roman poet who wrote funeral hymns to dying liberty.*

All day he wandered in the country. In the evening, he entered the beautiful village of Fontenay-aux-Roses, inhabited by a number of literary men, a beautiful place, where, when secretary of the Academy of Sciences, he had shared, if we may say so, in the royalty of Voltaire, surrounded by so many friends, almost courtiers, all of whom had fled, or been scattered. The house of the Petit Ménage, for thus M. and Madame Suard were named, still remained. Truly diminutive, both in mind and body, Suard, a

* Altera jam teritur bellis civilibus ætas;
* * * * * * *
Justum et tenacem propositi virum
* * * * * * *
Et cuncta terrarum subacta
Prætor atrocem animum Catonis.

pretty little man, and Madame, lively and graceful, were both literary, not writing books, but short articles; some things for the ministers, and some sentimental novels (Madame especially excelled in these last). Never were there persons who enjoyed life better. Both were influential, beloved, and respected to the last. Suard died a royal censor.

They quietly remained there until the storm should pass over; in the meanwhile, they employed their time composing trifles. When this fainting exile, with a ghastly countenance, untrimmed beard, and in sad disguise, suddenly appeared to them, the pretty little household was much discomposed. What had happened to him? They were entirely ignorant. One thing certain is, that Condorcet immediately went out by the garden-gate. He might return, they said; the door might be open; he will find it shut. The well-known selfishness of the Suards does not appear to me sufficient to authorize this story. They declare, and I believe them, that Condorcet, who had left Paris in order not to compromise any person, would not compromise them; he might have asked, and received, food; that is all.

He passed that night and the following day in the woods; but the constant walking fatigued him. A man chained to one spot for almost a year, and all at once commencing a violent exercise, would soon die of fatigue. Hunger forced him to enter, with his long beard and wild eyes, a tavern in Clamart. He ate voraciously, and at the same time, in order to sustain his courage, opened the Roman poet. His appearance, book, and white hands, all denounced him. The peasants who were drinking (it was the revolutionary club of Clamart), soon discovered that he was an enemy to the republic, and instantly dragged him before the authorities. There was one difficulty; he could not walk a step, his feet being so lacerated; and they were obliged to place him on the miserable horse of a vine-dresser who was passing. By these means, this illustrious representative of the eighteenth century was solemnly conducted to the prison of the Bourg-la-Reine. He saved the republic the crime of parricide, the shame of striking the last of the philosophers, without whom she would never have existed.

CHAPTER XII.

SOCIETY OF WOMEN—OLYMPE DE GOUGES, ROSE LACOMBE.

THE Jacobins called themselves *Friends of the Constitution;* the society which was formed underneath their hall was entitled: Brotherly Society of the Patriots of both Sexes, *Defenders of the Constitution;* it was firmly established the 31st May. On one occasion, when it protested against the decrees of the Constitutional Assembly, the appeal was signed by three thousand. About this time, it received an illustrious member in Madame Roland, then on a journey to Paris.

Unfortunately, we know but little of the associations of women. It is through accidental mentions by journals and biographies that slight traces of them may be found. Several of these societies were founded in 1790 and '91 by the brilliant improvisatrice of the South, Olympe de Gouges,

who, like Lopez de Vega, dictated a tragedy in a day. She was very illiterate; it is even said she did not know how to read and write. She was born at Montauban, in 1755. Her mother sold trinkets from house to house; her father was, according to some, a merchant, and, according to others, a literary man. Some believe her to have been a bastard of Louis XV. This unfortunate woman, full of generous ideas, was the martyr, the puppet of her easily worked upon sensibility. She established the right of women by one just and sublime saying: "They have as good a right to mount the tribune as they have of ascending the scaffold."

Revolutionary in July, '89, she was a royalist the 6th October, when she saw the unhappy king at Paris. Republican in June, '91, under the influence of the flight and treason of Louis XVI., she turned to him with renewed vigor when he was tried. Jests were made on her inconsistency, and, with her southern vehemence, she proposed duels, with pistols, with the jesters.

The Lafayette party especially contributed to lead her astray, by placing her at the head of a contra-revolutionary fete. They caused her to

exert herself, and write upon more than one transaction which her weak head could not understand. Mercier and her friends in vain advised her to stop; she persisted in continuing, depending on the purity of her intentions; she explained them to the public in a noble pamphlet, *The Pride of Innocence*. She was always full of pity. When she saw the king before the bar of the Convention, sincere republican as she was, she did not the less offer to defend him. The offer was not accepted; but, from that time, she was lost.

Women, when they brave parties, in devotion to the public, run a greater risk than men. It was the abominable Machiavelism of the time to attack those whose enthusiasm could be excited by heroism, and render them ridiculous by those outrages which brutality can easily find to inflict on the weaker sex. One day, Olympe was seated in a crowd; and a brutal wretch, seizing her head, held it tightly under his arm, and dragged off her bonnet; her hair fell down, her poor gray hair, destroyed by talent and passion, for she was only thirty-eight years old.

"Who bids for Olympe's head at fifteen sous?" cried the barbarian.

She softly said, without the least emotion: "My friend, my friend, I bid thirty sous for it."

The crowd laughed, and she escaped.

But it was not for a long time. Betrayed to the revolutionary tribunal, she had the frightful bitterness of seeing her son disown her with contempt. Then her strength failed her; by a sad reaction of nature, from which the most intrepid are not always exempt, melting into tears, she returned to the weak trembling woman, afraid of death. It was told her that women *enceinte* could obtain a reprieve; it is said that she wanted to have this excuse. A friend, overwhelmed in tears, was willing to render to her this sad office, of which everybody saw the inutility. When the matrons and surgeons were consulted by the tribunal, they were cruel enough to say, that if she was *enceinte*, it had happened too lately to be ascertained. On the scaffold her courage returned to her, and she died, leaving her memory to be avenged by her country.

In '93, the societies of women, until then so influential and powerful, were entirely changed. That of "the revolutionary women had for their chief and instigator, an eloquent and fearless

girl, who, on the night of the 31st May, in the general reunion of the *l'Evêché* when the destruction of the Girondists was decided, took the most violent part, distancing even the fury of the men. Her lover was the young Lyonnaise Leclerc, a disciple, I think, of Chalier, and on intimate terms with Jacques Roux, the *tribun* of the Rue Saint Martin, whose *discourses* were full of communist ideas. Leclerc, Roux, and some others, established a paper, *The Shade of Marat*, after his death, with but very slight Maratist tendencies.

These bold innovators, violently hated by Robespierre and the Jacobins, rendered themselves still more hostile to the society of women, by whom their doctrines had been well received.

On the other side, the fish and market women, of whom the greater part were royalists, were all greatly irritated at the diminution of their business, for which they very unjustly considered the societies of women responsible. Stronger and better fed than these women (who were for the most part seamstresses), they often beat them. Many times they invaded one of these societies in the charnel-houses of Saint Eustache, and put

them to flight by dint of blows. On the other side, the republicans did not like the fish-women not wearing the national cockade, which everybody, in conformity to the law, was obliged to do. In October '93, at the time of the destruction of the Girondists, clothed and armed as men, they walked up and down the market, insulting the fish-women; these last attacked them with their robust hands, to the great amusement of the men, and applied an indecent correction; Paris talked of nothing else. The Convention held a trial, but it was given against the victims; women were forbidden to hold assemblies in future. This great social question was thus closed by chance. What became of Rose Lacombe? It was a singular thing, that this violent woman, like the greater part of the terrorists of the time, had a day of weakness and humanity which caused her destruction. She greatly compromised herself by trying to save a suspected person. It was the tragical time of March '94, and she demanded a passport, as an actress, engaged in the theatre at Dunkirk. In June '94, we find her seated at the door of the prisons, selling wine, sugar, gingerbread, etc. etc., to the occupants, a lucrative position, for by the

connivance of the jailers, she was allowed to sell at any price. It was difficult to recognize the fiery bacchante of '93, in the interesting, mild, and polite tradeswoman.

CHAPTER XIII.

THÉROIGNE DE MERICOURT. (1789–1793.)

THERE still exists an engraved portrait of the beautiful, brave, and unfortunate Liegoise, who, on the 5th of October, commenced so grandly by gaining over the Flanders regiment to break the support of royalty, and who, on the 20th August, was among the first to enter the chateau, sword in hand, and receive a crown from the hand of the conquerors. Unhappily this portrait, drawn at the Salpêtrière, when she was crazy, but feebly recalls the heroic beauty which ravished the hearts of our fathers, causing them to see in a woman the figure of Liberty.

The round and firm head (a true Liegoise type), the black eye, rather large, and severe, had not lost its fire. Passion, and traces of the violent love by which this girl lived and died, still remain in it—love of man? no! (though it seems

a strange thing to say, judging from such a life), the love of the ideal, the love of Liberty and the Revolution.

The eye of the poor girl nevertheless is not haggard; it is full of bitterness, reproach and sorrow, at the remembrance of so great an ingratitude. Nevertheless, it has been harshly treated by time as well as by unhappiness. The large features have assumed something of coarseness. Excepting the black hair, inclosed in a handkerchief, all is in disorder; the naked bosom, her last remaining beauty, preserves its pure, firm, and virginal form, as if to testify that this unfortunate creature, prodigal to the passions of others, had herself used life but little.

In order to understand this woman, her country must be well explained: the Walloon country, from Tournay to Liege, especially the latter, our excitable little France de Meuse advancing as an *avant-garde* into the midst of the German population of the Low Countries. I have related its glorious history in the fourteenth century, when so many times broken, but never vanquished, this heroic population of a town was in combat with an empire, when three hundred Liegoise, in

one night, forced a camp of forty thousand in order to kill Charles the Bold (*Histoire de France*, vol. vi.). I have told how a Walloon, a worker of iron, of Meuris, saved the city of Nantes, in our wars of 1793, by a devotion which recalls that of the three hundred, and how La Vendée destroyed herself for the good of France.

In order to understand Théroigne, the condition of the town of Liege, this martyr to liberty at the commencement of the Revolution, must be well defined. Slave of an atrocious tyranny, slave of priests, she was free for two years only to fall again under the dominion of her bishop, re-established by Austria. Crowds of Liegoise, taking refuge in Paris, breathed on our armies their fury and valor, and were not less noted in our clubs by their inflammatory eloquence; they were our brothers and our children. Perhaps the most touching fête of the Revolution was that of the Commune, when the archives of Liege were solemnly adopted, and carried in procession through Paris before being received in its bosom at the Hôtel de Ville.

Théroigne was the daughter of a well-to-do farmer, who had given her some education, joined

to which she had great vivacity of spirits, and much natural eloquence. This northern race owes much to the south. Seduced by a German lord, and then abandoned, she excited much admiration, and was surrounded by lovers in England, but she preferred an Italian singer to them all; he was an ugly old castrato, who plundered her of her diamonds, and sold them. At that time she called herself (in memory of her country, La Campine), the Countess de Campinados. In France, her feelings were the same for those men who were strangers to love. She declared that she detested the immorality of Mirabeau; and that she only loved the dry, cold Sieyés, a born enemy of women. She also admired the austere mathematician, Romme, one of those who afterwards founded the worship of Reason, and was the author of the republican almanac. His face was ugly, but his heart was great and pure; he killed himself the day he thought the republic was lost, by stabbing himself to the heart. Romme arrived from Russia in 1789, as tutor to the young Prince Strogonoff; he had no scruples in taking his pupil to the *salons* of the Liegoise, frequented as they were by such men as Sieyés

and Pétion. It suffices to say, that, whatever was her doubtful position, Théroigne was no longer a maid.

She spent entire days at the assembly, not losing a word of what was said. One of the oft repeated jests of the royalists who drew up the *Acts of the Apostles*, was to marry Théroigne to the deputy Populus, whom she did not even know.

Even supposing Théroigne had done nothing, the admirable number of Camille Desmoulins for one of the sittings of the Cordeliers, would have made her immortal. The following is an extract from it:—

"The orator is interrupted; a noise is heard at the door; a pleasing murmur of approbation arose—a young lady enters and desires to be heard.—What! it was no other than Mademoiselle Théroigne! the beautiful Amazon of Liege! We recognize her coat of red silk, and her large sabre of the 5th of October. The enthusiasm was at its height, when Desmoulins cried out: 'It is the Queen of Sheba, coming to visit the Solomon of the districts.'

"She had already crossed the assembly, and with the light step of a panther, mounts the tribune.

Her fine, inspired head, glancing lightning, appears between the dark, prophetic faces of Danton and Marat.

"'If you are indeed Solomon,' she said, 'you will prove it by building a temple of liberty, a palace for the National Assembly—and you will build on the site of the Bastille.

"'How is it that, whilst the executive power inhabits the most beautiful palace of the universe, to wit, the pavilion of Flora and the colonnades of the Louvre, the legislative power is still encamped at the Tennis-court, like Noah's dove, which had not where to put its foot? This must not remain thus. The people must learn, by the sight of these two edifices, inhabited by these two powers, in which of them the true sovereign resides. What is a sovereign without a palace, a god without an altar? Who would acknowledge its worship?

"'Let us build this altar; and that all may contribute, let them bring their gold, and precious stones; here are mine. Let us build the only true altar; no other is worthy of God, but that where the first declaration of the rights of man was pronounced. Paris, as the guardian of this

temple, will be less a city than a country open to all; the tribes will come up to it as to a Jerusalem!' "

When Liege, crushed by the Austrians, was, in 1791, returned to its ecclesiastical tyrant, Théroigne did not fail her country. But she was followed from Paris to Liege, and arrested at the moment of her arrival, principally on the charge of aiding in the attack of the 6th of October against the Queen of France, sister to the Emperor Leopold. Brought to Vienna, and, after a long time, released for want of proof, she returned so exasperated against the agents of the queen, that she wanted them to be prosecuted, and brought before justice. She wrote her adventures, and was very anxious to have them printed; it is said that she had read some pages of them to the Jacobins, before the outbreak of the 10th of August.

One of the men whom she hated the most was the journalist Suleau, one of the most furious contra-revolutionary agents. She hated him, not only for the jests which he had written against her, but for having published a paper, the *Tocsin des Rois*, at Brussels, among the Austrians, which crushed the Revolution at Liege. Suleau was

dangerous, not only from his pen, but by his courage, and the extensive range of the influence, which he commanded in his own country and elsewhere. Montlosier relates that, when in some danger, Suleau said to him: "If it is needful, I will send all my Picardy to your help." Suleau, by his wonderful activity, was everywhere; and was often met in disguise. Lafayette said that before 1790 he thus saw him coming out of the hôtel of the Archbishop of Bordeaux, in the evening. Again disguised, and completely armed, on the morning of the 10th of August, at the moment of the most violent popular fury, when the crowd, infuriated in advance of the combat which was going to take place, were seeking enemies, Suleau was taken, and from that time was a doomed man. He was arrested among a false patrol of royalists, who, armed with blunderbusses, were reconnoitring round the Tuileries. Théroigne was walking with a French guard on the terrace of the Feuillants when Suleau was arrested. If he perished, she it was who, at least, caused his death. Even the jests which he had written against her would have prevented her protecting him. In a chivalric point of view, she should have defended him;

but in the point of view which was then dominant among republicans, in ferocious imitation of antiquity, she ought to strike the public enemy as if it was her own. A commissary, mounted on a trestle, tried to calm the crowd; Théroigne overthrew him, took his place, and spoke against Suleau. Two hundred men of the National Guard defended their prisoners; an order was obtained from the section to cease all resistance. They were called out one by one, and killed by the crowd. Suleau, it is said, showed a great deal of courage—snatching a sabre from one of the murderers, he strove to make his way through them. In order to adorn this recital, it is supposed that the virago (small and very delicate, in spite of her great energy), with her own sabre, struck at this tall man, whose vigor and strength were increased tenfold by despair. Others said that the French guard, on whose arm Théroigne was leaning, struck the first blow.

Her participation in the events of the 10th August, and the crown which the Marseillaise conquerors had awarded her, drew her into a closer connection with the Girondists, friends of the Marseillaise, and who had brought them forward.

She became still more attached to them for the horror they expressed at the massacre of September, and which she herself was most vehement against. Since April, '92, she had quarrelled with Robespierre, proudly saying, in a *café*, that, if he calumniated her without proof, "she would withdraw her esteem from him." This speech, ironically related in the evening by Collot d'Herbois to the Jacobins, threw the amazon into a ridiculous excess of rage. She was in a tribune in the midst of those devoted to Robespierre. In spite of the efforts made to restrain her, she jumped on the barrier which separated the tribune from the hall, made her way through the crowd of enemies, in vain demanding to be heard; they stopped their ears, fearing to hear some blasphemy against the god of the temple. Poor Théroigne was brutally driven out without being listened to.

She was still very popular, loved, and admired by the crowd for her courage and beauty; and means were thought of to deprive her of this charm, to disgrace her by one of the most cowardly outrages which a man could exercise on a woman. She was walking alone on the terrace of the Feuillants; they formed a group around her,

closing on her suddenly, and seizing her, drew up her petticoats, and naked, amid the derision of the crowd, whipped her as a child. Her prayers, her cries, her shrieks of despair, only augmented the laughter of the cynical and cruel mob. At last, released, the unfortunate creature continued her shrieks; her dignity and courage both being wounded by this outrage: she had lost her mind. From 1795 to 1817, during the long period of twenty-four years (the half of her life), she remained stark mad, shrieking as at the first day. It was heart-rending to see this heroic and charming woman, fallen lower than the beasts, dashing herself against the bars, tearing herself, and eating her excrements. The royalists are satisfied, as they see the vengeance of God on one whose fatal beauty intoxicated the Revolution in its first days.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE VENDEAN WOMEN IN 1790 AND 1791.

At the moment when the emigrants, on the anniversary of Saint Bartholomew, the 24th and 25th August, were taking the enemy by the hand, and opening to them the eastern frontiers, the Vendean war burst out in the west.

It was a singular thing, that on the 25th August, the day when the Vendean peasantry assailed the Revolution, that the Revolution, in its generous partiality, was deciding for the peasant the prolonged lawsuit of centuries, in abolishing the feudal right without any indemnity. At this time, all nations, Savoy, Italy, Germany, and Belgium, and the cities which are their gates, Nice, Chamberg, Mayence, Liege, Brussels, and Anvers, were all wearing the tri-color cockade; all were ambitious of becoming Frenchmen. And there was found a people blind enough to arm them-

selves against France, their mother, against a people who were themselves. These poor, ignorant creatures, led astray, cried out: "Death to the nation!"

This Vendean war was a most mysterious thing. It was a war of errors and enigmas, a war of phantoms and unseen spirits. The most contradictory reports were circulated; but none of the inquirers learnt anything. After some tragical occurrence, commissioners were sent, and arrived in the parish unattended; but everything was peaceful; the peasant at his work; the woman seated at the door, spinning, among her children, her large rosary around her neck. The lord? He was seated at dinner, to which he invited the commissioners, who retired charmed with everything. The next day, murders and incendiaries recommenced.

Where then can we seize the flying genius of the civil war? Let us look around. I do not see anything except, far off on the heath, a gray nun, who is walking with her head lowered in a very humble manner.

I do not see anything except, between two forests, a lady on horseback, followed by a domes-

tic. She is jumping the ditches, and, leaving the beaten pathway, takes a cross-road; but she does not appear to have the least fear of being met.

On another route, but walking in the same direction, appears an honest peasant woman, carrying a basket full of eggs and fruit on her arm. She walks quickly, wishing to arrive in the town before night.

But where are the nun, the lady, and the peasant woman going? They are each following three roads, which lead to the same place. They are, all three, going to knock at the door of a convent. Why not? The lady has a little girl whom she wants to be educated; the countrywoman comes to sell; and the good sister asks shelter for one night. Do you say that they come to take orders from the priest? He is not there to-day. Yes, but he was yesterday. Saturday he must come and confess the nuns. Confessor and director, he did not direct them alone, but through them many others. He confides to these impassioned hearts, to these indefatigable tongues, whatever secret he wanted made known, whatever false report he wished spread, and whatever signal he wished reported. Immovable in his retreat, by

means of these immovable nuns, he stirred up all the country. In the women and priest, we have seen the whole of the civil war of La Vendée.

Note well, that without the women, the priest would not have been able to do anything.

One evening, a republican commander arrived in a village where the women alone remained, this frightful war having destroyed so many men, and said: "*Ah, the brigands are the women, who cause so much unhappiness. Without the women, the Republic would be established, and we could remain tranquilly in our homes.* You will all perish, for I will shoot you to-morrow, and the day after to-morrow the brigands themselves will come and kill us." (*Memoirs of Madame de Sapinaud.*)

He did not kill the women; but he had given the true cause of the civil war; he understood it better than any one else. This republican officer had been a priest, who had thrown aside the cassock. He knew perfectly well that all this secret work was accomplished by the intimate and profound understanding between the priest and the woman. The woman was the house; but above that was the church and confessional. The dark oak cupboard, where the kneeling woman re-

ceived and spread, amidst her prayers and tears, the most ardent and burning fanaticism, was the hearth of the civil war.

Where is the wife, again? The all-powerful influence on conjugal habits, the invincible power of sighs and tears on the ear, is the bed. The husband is fatigued, and sleeps; but she does not sleep. She tosses, turns, and manages to awake him every instant by a deep sigh, and sometimes a sob.

"But, what is the matter with you to-night?"

"Alas! the poor king in the temple! Ah! they have struck him like our Lord Jesus Christ!"

The husband falls asleep for one moment.

"It is said that the church is to be sold! the church and the parsonage! Ah! misfortune, misfortune to the one who would buy it!"

Thus, in each family, in each house, the contra-revolution had an ardent, zealous, and untiring preacher, not suspected, sincere, and deeply impassioned, who wept, suffered, and in whose every word appeared the agonies of a broken heart. Immense, and truly invincible strength! In proportion as the Revolution, provoked by resistance, was obliged to strike one blow, in return, she received another; the influence of the tears, sighs,

sobs, and cries of the wife, were more piercing than daggers. Little by little, this cruel divorce, this unhappiness revealed itself; the wife was the obstacle and contradiction to the progress of the Revolution, favored by the husband. This most grave and terrible fact of the time has been too little noticed.

Iron has cut short the life of many men; but behold one still more powerful! An invincible iron has separated the bond of the family, placing the husband on one side, and the wife on the other.

This tragical and unhappy state of affairs first appeared about '92. It was either from love of the past, or the force of habit, or weakness of heart, and a too natural pity for the victims of the Revolution, or, finally, from devotion to, and dependence on, the priest, the wife became the defender of the contra-revolution.

It was on the material ground of the acquisition of national goods which the moral dispute between the husband and wife was generally placed.

The material question? We can say yes or no.

At first, it was the question of life or death for the Revolution. No taxes being paid, there was

no revenue but in the sale of national goods. If this sale was not realized, she was disarmed, and given up to invasion. The good of the moral revolution, and the victory of the principles, were dependent upon the financial revolution. To buy was a civic act which served in a direct way the good of the country; it was an act of faith and hope. That is to say, that they were embarking on the vessel of state that was in danger, with which they were either to land in safety or perish. The good citizen bought, but the bad citizen wanted to keep others from buying.

On one side, to keep back the payment of taxes, and on the other, the sale of national goods, was to deprive the Revolution of food, to starve it; this was the simple, but well-conceived plan of the ecclesiastic party. The nobles brought foreigners against them, and priests prevented them from defending themselves. One stabbed France, and the other disarmed it.

By what means could the priest arrest the movement of the Revolution? By placing the wife in opposition to the husband, and, through her, closing the purse of each household against the wants of the State.

Forty thousand pulpits, and a hundred thousand confessionals were working to accomplish this end. It was an enormous machine, of incalculable strength, which fought without difficulty against the revolutionary machine of the press and clubs, and forced these, if they wished to conquer, to organize the Reign of Terror.

But already, in 1789, 1790, 1791 and 1792, the ecclesiastical terror prevailed in sermons and the confession. The wife returned home with her head lowered, stunned and overwhelmed with fright. On every side she saw but hell and eternal flames. If anything more was done everybody would be damned. If they obeyed the laws or paid the taxes, they would be damned. But the depth of the abyss of torments without any remedy, the sharpest claw of the devil, was for the purchaser of national goods. How could she dare continue to eat with him? his bread was but ashes. How could she sleep with a lost one? be his half, the same flesh? Was it not to burn already, to enter alive into damnation?

Who can tell in how many ways the husband was pursued, assailed and tormented, in order to be persuaded from buying? A skilful general,

a cunning captain, investing the walls of a place he wishes to enter, never employed so many different means. These goods were never accompanied with prosperity. They were cursed goods, as had already been seen by the fate of each buyer. John, who had bought, had he not had a hail-storm the very first thing? Still worse, Peter's roof fell in, Paul's child died, and was not James inundated? M. le Curé had truly said, "Thus will die the first-born of Egypt!"

Generally the husband did not answer, but turning his back made pretence to sleep; he had nothing to answer to this flood of words. His wife embarrassed him by her vivacity of feeling, by naïve and moving eloquence, or at least by tears. He returned no answer, except by one speech, which we shall presently give: however, he was not the less firm. It was not an easy thing to become the enemy of his benefactress, his mother, the Revolution, who took his part, decided for him, set him free, made him a man, and drew him from nothing. Even if he had gained nothing, could he without effort escape from joining in the general freedom? Could he despise this triumph of justice, shut his eyes

to the sublime spectacle of that immense creation; a world budding into life? He thus resisted within himself: "No no; all this is just, whatever they may say. I will not be the man to profit by it, though I still believe it just." This was the position of affairs in nearly all France. The husband resisted, and the man remained faithful to the Revolution. In La Vendée, Maine, Brittany, and the greater part of Anjou, the wife carried all before her; that is to say, the wife and the priest intimately united.

All the efforts of the wife were employed in restraining her husband from buying national goods. The land so long and ardently coveted by the peasant, at the moment when the law gave it to him, if we may say so, his wife threw herself before him, kept him from it in the name of God. And was it in the prevalence of this (blind but honorable) disinterestedness of woman that the priest could have profited from the material advantage offered to him by the Revolution? He would most certainly have fallen in the opinion of his parishioners, would have deprived them of their confidence in him, and displaced

him from the high ideal where their prejudiced hearts loved to place him.

Much has been said of the influence of priests on women, but not enough on that of women on priests. My belief is that they were more sincere and violent fanatics than the priests themselves; that their ardent sensibility, their sorrowful pity for the victims of the Revolution, culpable or not, the exaltation which the tragical story of the king in the Temple, the queen, the little dauphin, and Madame de Lamballe, threw them into, in a word, the deep action of pity and nature on the heart of women, was the real strength of the contra-revolution. They carried away, and governed those who appeared to lead them, thrust their confessors into the path of martyrdom, and their husbands into a civil war. The eighteenth century knew but little of the soul of the priest. It knew very well that woman had influence over him; but they believed the old Christmas stories and the village jests, that the woman who governed the priest, was the housekeeper, who slept under his roof, the servant-mistress, the lady of the parsonage. But they were mistaken. There is no doubt, that if the housekeeper had been the

wife of the heart, the one who so deeply influences, the priest would have received, and seized with joy, the benefits of the Revolution. A stipendiary with a fixed salary, sufficient for the family, he would have soon found, in the natural progress of the new order of things, his true liberty in the power of changing a concubinage into marriage. And the housekeeper was not unworthy of it; unfortunately, whatever may have been her merit, she was generally older than the priest, and with a bad and vulgar figure. The heart of the priest would not have remained to her, even if she had been young and beautiful. He knew very well, that her heart was in the confessional, and not in the parsonage. The housekeeper was his vulgar daily life, his prose; the penitent is his poetry; it is with her that he has those intimate, and deep relations of the heart. And these relations were nowhere stronger than in the west. On our northern frontiers, in all the countries through which the troops were coming and going, and which breathed but of war, the ideal of women was the military officer. The epaulet is almost invincible.

In the south, and especially in the west, the

ideal of the women, country women at least, was the priest. The priest of Brittany, particularly, ought to have both pleased and governed; son of a peasant, he was on a level with the country women by condition; he had the relation of thought and language with them; he was but little above them by culture. If he had been more cultivated and eminent than he was, he would not have been so beloved. The neighborhood, and sometimes families, have also aided to create relations between them. She has seen this curé as a child; has played with him, and grown up with him; it was as if he was a young brother to whom she loved to recount her sorrows, and especially a wife's greatest sorrow; how marriage was not always a marriage; how the happiest have need of consolation, the best beloved of love.

If marriage was the union of souls, the true husband is the confessor. This spiritual marriage was very strong, especially when it was pure. The priest was often loved with a passion, an *abandon*, an overpowering force, and with a jealousy which was but little hidden. These feelings burst out with great strength when, in June, '91,

the king having been taken from Varennes, rumors of the existence of a great conspiracy in the West were spread, and several chiefs of the departments took upon themselves to imprison the priests. They were released in September, when the king swore to the Constitution. But in November, general measures were taken against those who refused the oath. The Assembly authorized the chiefs to banish the refractory priests of every commune whose peace was disturbed by religious trouble.

This measure was acted on not only by the outrages of which the constitutional priests were everywhere the object, but also from a political and financial necessity.

The order which all these priests had received from ecclesiastical superiors, and which they faithfully followed, was, we have said, to starve out the Revolution. They rendered the levying of taxes impossible. It became so dangerous a thing in Brittany, that nobody was willing to undertake it. The excisemen and municipal officers were often in danger of death. The Assembly was forced to issue the decree of the 27th November, '91, which was sent to the strongholds

of the refractory priests. It banished them from their communes, from the centre of activity, from the hearth of fanaticism and rebellion, of which they were kindling the fire. They were brought to the great towns under the eye and unceasing surveillance of patriotic societies.

It is impossible to describe the clamors awoke by this decree. Women pierced the air with their cries. The law had believed in the celibacy of the priest; had treated him as an isolated individual, who could go from place to place with more ease than the head of a family. The priest, the man of the mind, does he attach himself to persons and places? Was he not essentially movable, like the spirit of which he was the minister? To all these questions, they answered negatively; they accused themselves. At the moment when the law took the priest from his ground, the living roots which he had planted were perceived; they bleed and cry.

"Alas! taken away so far, dragged to the capital, at twelve, fifteen, twenty leagues from the village." They wept for this distant exile. At the slow means of travelling in vogue at that time, when two days were needed to traverse such a

distance, they were the more afflicted. The capital was the end of the world. To undertake such a voyage, one made his will, and placed his conscience in order.

Who can describe the sorrowful scenes of these forced departures? All the village was assembled; the women, kneeling to receive the benediction, were choked with sobs and tears. Some of them wept day and night. If the husband expressed his astonishment at this, it was not for the exiled curé they were crying, it was for such a church that was to be sold, or such a convent about to be shut up. In the spring of 1792, the financial necessities of the Revolution at last induced the decision of the sale of those churches which were not indispensable to worship, those belonging to monasteries and convents. A letter from an emigrant bishop, dated Salisbury, and addressed to the Ursulines of Landerneau, was intercepted, and clearly proved that the centre hotbed of royalist intrigue was in these convents. The nuns neglected nothing which could give to their repulsion a dramatic effect; they clasped the grating, and would not leave it until the municipal officers, themselves forced to obey

the law, and were responsible for its execution, dragged them from the grating with their own hands.

Such scenes, related, and at each repetition, overwhelmed with pathetic additions, disturbed all minds. Men commenced to be excited almost as much as women. An astonishing and rapid change! In 1788, the peasant was at war with the Church for tithes, always trying to dispute them. Who was it, then, who had so well and quickly reconciled him with the priest? The Revolution itself, by abolishing tithes. By this more generous than politic measure, it returned to the priest his influence over the country. If tithes had remained, the peasant would never have yielded to his wife, would never have taken up arms against the Revolution.

The rebellious priests, collected in the capital, knew perfectly well the state of the country, the deep sorrow of the women, and the sullen indignation of the men. They drew great hopes from it, and undertook to communicate them to the king. Amongst the quantity of letters which they wrote, or caused to be written him in the spring of 1792, they encouraged him to keep

firm, to have no fear of the Revolution, to paralyze it by the constitutional obstacle, the *veto*. They preached to him resistance in every way, employing different arguments, under the names of different people: sometimes there were letters from bishops, written in the words of Bossuet: "Sire, you are the very Christian king. Recall the memory of your ancestors. What would Saint Louis have done?" etc. Sometimes, there were letters from nuns, principally complaining ones. These plaintive doves, thrust out of their nests, asked of the king the liberty to remain and die there. Others said, that they wished the king to arrest the execution of the law relative to the sale of ecclesiastical property. Those of Rennes confessed that the municipality had offered them a house; but it was not theirs, and they never would be satisfied with any other.

The boldest and most curious letters, are those of the priests: "Sire, we are not ignorant that you are a pious man. You do what you can. But at least, you must know that the people are tired of the Revolution. The public mind is changed, fervor is returning to it; the sacraments

are frequented. Canticles have succeeded songs —the people are with us."

A terrible letter of this kind, is that of the refractory priests reunited at Angers (February 9, 1792), which deceived* and emboldened him, thrusting him forward to his destruction. It might pass for the original act of La Vendée, by announcing and prophesying it most boldly. They spoke very loud and confidently of having under their command a disposable force of armed peasants. This blood-thirsty page seems to be written by the hand, by the dagger of Bermier, a young curé of Angers, who, more than any one else, sowed dissension in La Vendée, sullied it by crimes, divided it by his ambition, and made it subservient to his own interests.

"They say that we excite the population! But, on the contrary, what would become of the kingdom if we did not restrain the people? Your throne will have no other support than a heap of corpses and ruins. You well know, sire, what a

* These letters (kept in the National Archives, in the iron chest, c. 37, papers of the trial of Louis XVI.) furnish extenuating circumstances in favor of this uncertain and timorous man, whose mind was constantly tortured by them.

people can do, who believe themselves patriotic. But you do not know what a people are capable of who see their worship, temple, and altars carried away."

This letter is a remarkably bold avowal. It is the *va-tout* of the priest, it was his last cry before the civil war. He did not hesitate to reveal the principal and deep cause of his despair, namely, the sorrow at being separated from those whom he directed: "*They have dared to interrupt those communications* which the Church not only permits but authorizes," etc.

These prophets of the civil war, were sure of the facts they advanced; they risked little in deceiving themselves; they foretold what they themselves did. The women of the priests, housekeepers of the curés and others, burst out the first, with a more than conjugal violence, against the citizen curés. At Saint Servan, near Saint Malo, it was like a riot of women. In Alsace, it was the housekeeper of a curé who first sounded the alarm to fall upon those priests who had taken the oath. The Bretons sounded no alarm, but they struck; they invaded the churches, armed with brooms, and beat the priests at the

altar. More certain means yet were employed by the nuns. The Ursulines, in their innocent schools for young girls, arranged the Chouan war. *The Daughters of Wisdom*, whose convent was at Saint Laurent, near Montaigu, continued to fan the fire; these good infirmary sisters, whilst tending the sick, innoculated them with fury.

"Leave them alone," said the philosophers and friends of tolerance; "let them weep and cry, and sing their old canticles. What harm is there in that?" Yes, but enter this village church in the evening, where the people are hastening in crowds. Do you hear these chants, and do you not shudder? The litanies and hymns, with the old words, are changed by the accent into another Marseillaise. And the *Dies irae*, shouted with fury, is nothing but a prayer of murder, an appeal to the eternal fires.

"Leave them," they said, "they are singing; do not be disturbed." However, large crowds were seen to collect. In Alsace, eight thousand peasants assembled in order to prevent the placing of seals on ecclesiastical property. It was said that these good people had no other arms than their rosaries; but in the evening they had, for when

the constitutional curé entered his house, he was received with stones at his windows, and sometimes a ball pierced his outside shutters.

It was not the small springs of intrigue timidly managed and directed, which thrust the masses into a civil war. The greatest means were boldly employed to fire their minds, and overwhelm them with fanaticism; they were surrounded on all sides with error and murder. The good Virgin Mary appeared, and commanded them to kill. At Apt, in Avignon, she moved, performed miracles, and declared that she did not wish to remain any longer in the hands of the constitutionals; the rebels carried her away at the cost of a sharp combat. But there was too much sun in Provence; the Virgin preferred appearing in La Vendée, amongst fogs, thick woods, and impenetrable hedges. She profited by the old local superstitions; and showed herself in three different places, always near an old druid oak. Her favorite place was the Saint Laurent, where the *Daughters of Wisdom* retailed the miracles, the call for blood.

This violent and direct preparation for the civil war, the intimate relation of the women and

the priest, the priest with the king, and that of the king (suspected then, and proved since) with the enemies of France, from whom, since 1791, he had been asking armies, all this had its effect. The constitutional royalists, who have believed it possible to conciliate liberty and royalty, and continue the ancient worship, were broken up, and forced to give place to the Girondists, who killed royalty, to the Montagnards, who killed the king, but who, by that action alone, created in the feelings of the populace and the hearts of women the most formidable machine of the contra-revolution: the legend of Louis XVI.

CHAPTER XV.

MADAME ROLAND. (1791-92.)

To desire to have a republic, to form and inspire it, is not enough to have a noble heart and great mind. There is one other thing wanting; and what? To be young, to have this youth of the soul, this fire of the blood, and this teeming imagination which already sees in the world what is but in the soul, and which seeing, creates it; there must be faith.

There must be a certain harmony, not only of will and ideas, but of republican habits and manners; to have within one's self the moral and only legitimate republic, upon which the political one is founded; I mean to say to possess the government of one's self, one's own democracy, to find one's liberty in obedience to the laws. And there is one thing that appears contradictory, that a virtuous and strong soul, should have an

impassioned moment which would cause it to leave itself, and turn to action.

During the dark days of depression and fatigue, when the revolutionary faith was weakening, several of the deputies and principal actors of the times went to be inspired with strength and courage, to a house where these two qualities were never wanting; a modest little abode, the Hôtel Brittanic, in the street Guènégaud, near the Pont Neuf. This street, which was very dark, led to the street Mazarine, which was still darker, not having had, it is said, any other view than the long walls of La Monnaie. They ascended to the third story, and invariably found there two persons working together; they were M. and Madame Roland, recently come from Lyons. The little *salon* only contained one table where the husband and wife were writing; the door, half open into the bed-chamber, disclosed two beds. Roland was then about sixty years old, she thirty-six, and appeared much younger; it seemed as if he was the father of his wife. He was tall and thin, with an austere yet animated countenance. This man, who has been too much sacrificed to

the glory of his wife,* was an ardent citizen, who had France in his heart, one of those old Frenchmen of the race of Vauban and Bois Guilbert, who, under royalty, did not the less pursue, in the only way then open, the sacred idea of public good. Inspector of manufactures, he had spent all his life in work and journeying, striving to seek out all the amelioration of which our mechanic arts were susceptible.

He had published several of his travels, and various treatises or memoirs, relative to certain trades. His beautiful and courageous wife, without being discouraged at the dryness of the subject, copied, translated, and corrected for him. *The Trade of the Turf-digger*, *The Art of Manufacturing Short Dry Wool*, and *The Dictionary of Manufactures*, have all passed under the beautiful

* Before her marriage with Roland, Mademoiselle Phlipon had been forced by the misconduct of her father to take refuge in a convent in the street Neuve Saint Etienne, which leads to the Jardin des Plantes; a little street rendered illustrious by the memories of Pascal, Rollin, and Bernardin de Saint Pierre. She did not live there as a nun, but remained in her chamber, between Rousseau and Plutarch; gay and courageous, as she always was, but in extreme poverty, already seeming with a more than Spartan sobriety, to practise the virtues of the Republic.

hand of Madame Roland, absorbing her best years, without any other interruption than the birth and nursing of her only child. Intimately connected with the thoughts and works of her husband, she had a kind of filial worship for him, which even went so far, as her often preparing his food for him; and especial care was necessary, for the stomach of the old man was delicate, and exhausted by labor.

Roland wrote also himself, and did not entirely at this time depend on the pen of his wife; it was later in life, when nominated minister, in the midst of embarrassments, and a multiplicity of cares, that he had recourse to it. She was not anxious to write, and if the Revolution had not drawn her from her retreat, these useful gifts of talent and eloquence would have been buried forever.

When the politicians came, Madame Roland took no part in the discussions, but continued her work or wrote letters; but if, as it sometimes happened, they appealed to her, she answered with a vivacity, a propriety of expression, and a graceful yet penetrating strength, which seized on the attention of all. "Self-love would have

liked to have found some preparation in what she said; but it was impossible; it proceeded simply from a too perfect nature."

At the first glance, we are tempted to believe that she was the Julia of Rousseau;* but we are wrong, it was neither Julia nor Sophie, it was Madame Roland, certainly a daughter of Rousseau, and a more legitimate one, perhaps, than those who emanated from his pen. She was not a noble young girl, like the two others. Her maiden name was Manon Phlipon (I am sorry for those who do not like plebeian names); her father was an engraver, and whilst under the paternal roof she joined him in that trade. She came from the people. She possessed a certain brilliancy of color which is seldom found in the

* See the portraits of Lémontey, Riouffe and many others; and the excellent yet simple portrait, placed by Champagneux in the first edition of his memoirs (vol. viii.). It was taken a short time before her death, when she was thirty-nine years old; she was strong, firm and resolute, yet very serene looking; she was already a little *embonpoint*, if we dare say so; but her countenance had a censorious expression, which did not belong alone to her revolutionary polemics; but is generally found in those who have struggled, and given but little time to pleasure; who have restrained and thrust their feelings from them, and have not found satisfaction in this world.

elevated classes; her hand was finely shaped, yet large; her mouth large, and chin was round; she was of an elegant height, yet a strongly marked stoop, and with larger hips and bosom than are often seen among ladies. She was in another point different from the heroines of Rousseau: she had not their weaknesses. Madame Roland was virtuous, and not weakened by inaction or revery, which generally enervates women; she was laborious and active to the greatest degree; work was to her the guardian of her virtue. The sacred thought of duty, hung over this beautiful life from its birth to its death; she herself, at the last moment, at an hour when no one lies, testified to this: "Nobody has known pleasure less than I have;" and afterwards, "I have commanded my feelings." She was as pure as the deep blue of the heavens; in the paternal mansion, on the quai de l'Horloge, at the table of her grave husband, working for him; as pure at the cradle of her child, which she persisted in nursing, in spite of the agonies she suffered; and she was not less pure in the letters which she wrote to her friends, the young men, who surrounded her with pas-

sionate friendship;* she calmed and consoled them, raising them above their weaknesses. They and virtue remained faithful to her, even unto death.

One of them, without thinking of the danger, went to prison, to receive from her, during the height of the Reign of Terror, those immortal papers in which she related the events of her life. Though banished himself, and forced to fly over the snow, without any other shelter than the trees covered with frost, he saved these sacred papers; or perhaps they saved him, by keeping within him the fire and strength of the great heart who wrote them.†

* For instance, the beautiful letter to Bosc, who was much distressed and very sad at finding her settled near Lyons and so far from Paris. "After a peaceful evening and the cares of the morning, we are seated at the fireside, my friend at his desk, my little one knitting, and myself chatting with one, and watching the work of the other, tasting the happiness of being in the midst of my little and cherished family, writing to a friend, whilst the snow, falling on so many unhappy ones, my heart is full of pity for their fate." It was an affecting picture of the interior of a family, and the quiet happiness of virtue, shown to a young man to calm, purify his heart. To-morrow, however, the blast of the tempest will have carried away this nest.

† It was the worthy and noble Bosc, who, in the last moment, rising above himself, in order to accomplish in her the supreme ideal which he had always admired, gave her the

Men who suffer at the sight of a too perfect nature, have anxiously sought for some weakness in the life of this woman; and without the least proof, or sign,* they have imagined that at the height of the drama in which she was a performer, at her most courageous moment, amongst dangers and horrors (apparently after September! or on the eve of the flood which swept away the Girondists!) Madame Roland had the time, or the heart to listen to gallant speeches or to make love. The only thing which embarrasses them is the trouble in finding the name of the favored lover.

noble counsel not to deprive others of the sight of her death; to accept the scaffold instead of poison; to die publicly, and to honor the Republic and humanity by her death. He followed her to immortality. For this heroic counsel, Madame Roland walked to the scaffold smiling, hand in hand with her austere husband, conducting the group of amiable, irreproachable friends (without speaking of the Girondists), Bosc, Champagneux and Bancal des Issarts. Nothing could separate them.

* If you seek for these signs, they will point out two passages in the Memoirs of Madame Roland, which prove nothing. She speaks of the passions, "from which, with the vigor of a wrestler, middle age scarcely saves her." What do you draw from that? She speaks of the "good reasons" she had, about the 31st May, to hasten her departure. It is very extraordinary and absurdly bold to infer that these good reasons could be nothing but love for Barbaroux or Buzot.

Again, there is one event which gave rise to these suppositions. Madame Roland, everybody says, was always queen of herself, absolute mistress of her wishes and acts. Did she never show any emotion? Had this strong, yet passionate soul, never experienced a storm? This question is different, and unhesitatingly we answer, yes.

We will explain, that this fact, hitherto seldom remarked, is not an indifferent detail, merely an anecdote of private life. It had a great influence over Madame Roland in 1791, and the powerful control which she exercised from this time will be less inexplicable, if the particular causes which stirred up this soul, generally so calm and firm, but whose strength was concealed within herself without influencing those around, were known.

In 1789 Madame Roland was leading an obscure and laborious life, in the sad inclosure of La Platiere, near Villefranche, and not far from Lyons. With the rest of France, she had heard the cannon of the Bastille: her bosom swelled—this wonderful event seemed to realize her dreams; all that she had read of the ancients, all that she had imagined and hoped—behold

how she has now a country! The Revolution spread itself over France: Lyons, Villefranche, the country, and all the villages, awoke. The confederation of 1798 called to Lyons half the kingdom, all the deputations from the National Guard, from Corsica to Lorraine. From early in the morning Madame Roland was in ecstasies; on the *quai* of the Rhone, intoxicated, as all the people were, with this new brotherhood, of budding splendor. In the evening she wrote an account of it to her friend, Champagneux, a young man of Lyons, who, without profit, and in a spirit of pure patriotism, edited a paper. This number, not signed, sold to the amount of sixty thousand. All the National Guard, on returning to their homes, carried away with them, without knowing it, the soul of Madame Roland.

She returned, pensively, to her sad inclosure of La Platiere, which appeared to be, even more than in general, dry and uncultivated. But little suited at that time to the technical works which occupied her husband, she read the *Proces-verbal*, so interesting *to the electors of* 1789, the revolution of the 14th July, and the taking of the Bastille. Chance willed that one of these electors, M. Ban-

cal des Issarts, should be introduced to the Rolands by their friends in Lyons, and passed some days with them. M. Bancal was of a manufacturing family in Montpellier, and had settled in Clermont, as a notary; he had left this lucrative profession in order to give himself up entirely to the studies of his choice, to political and philanthropical researches, and to the duties of a citizen. He was forty years old, not brilliant, yet with much mildness and sensibility, and a good and charitable heart. He had had a very religious education, and, after having passed through a philosophical and political period, in the Convention, and a long captivity in Austria, he died with great feelings of piety, whilst trying to read the Bible in Hebrew.

He was brought to La Platiere by a young physician, Lanthenas, a friend of the Rolands, who sometimes lived with them, for weeks and months at a time, working with and for them, and accomplishing their commissions. The mildness of Lanthenas, the sensibility of Bancal des Issarts, the austere but warm goodness of Roland, the common love for the beautiful and good, and their attachment to this perfect woman,

who presented to them the image of liberty, formed the materials for an harmonious group. They agreed so well that one of them asked if they could not live together. No one knows from which of the three this idea came, but Roland seized it with joyfulness, and advocated it with zeal. The Rolands, by collecting all they possessed, could bring six thousand livres to the association; Lanthenas had about twenty, or may be a little more, and Bancal added a hundred thousand. This made a large enough sum to enable them to buy some of the national property, then selling at a very low price.

Nothing could be more touching, noble, and straightforward than the letters to Bancal, in which Roland spoke of this project. This noble confidence and faith in friendship and virtue, gave to Roland and all of them, the most elevated ideas. "Come, my friend," he wrote, "what keeps you? You have seen our frank and sturdy manners; at my age one does not commence to change, after having never varied. We proclaim patriotism, and we elevate the soul; the doctor continues his trade; my wife is the apo-

thecary of the sick in the canton. You and I will continue our business," &c.

The principal business of Roland was to catechise the peasants of the neighborhood, to preach the new gospel to them. He was an admirable walker, in spite of his age; and sometimes, with a cane in his hand, would go as far as Lyons with his friend, Lanthenas, sowing the good seed of liberty along the road. The noble man thought that he would find a useful assistant in Bancal, a new missionary, whose mild and melting words would work miracles. Accustomed to see the disinterested assiduity of the young Lanthenas to Madame Roland, it did not enter his mind that Bancal, both older and graver, could bring anything but peace into his household. He loved his wife so deeply that he had almost forgotten that she was a woman, and only saw in her the constant companion of his labors. Laborious, grave, fresh and pure, with a transparent complexion, a firm and liquid eye, Madame Roland was the reassuring image of strength and virtue. Her manner was that of a woman, but her masculine mind, and stoical heart, was that of a man. It has been observed that the friends which sur-

rounded her, were effeminate; Bancal, Lanthenas, Bose, and Champagneux, were all very mild; and the one who, perhaps, had the most womanish, weak heart of all, was he whom they believed to be the firmest, the austere Roland, weak from the deep passion of the old man attached to the life of another; it did not appear so plainly until the approach of death. Her situation had been, if not perilous, at least full of combats and storms. It was Volmar calling Saint Preux to Julie. It was the barque in danger on the rocks of Meillerie. Let us believe that there had been no shipwreck, but it would have been safer not to have embarked.

What Madame Roland wrote to Bancal in a virtuous letter, was at the same time too naïve and touching. This letter, exceedingly imprudent, has remained as an invaluable monument of the purity, inexperience, and virginity of the heart of Madame Roland, which she always retained. It ought only to be read whilst kneeling.

Nothing has more surprised and touched me. What! was this indeed a woman? There was only one instance when this great courage wavered. The cuirass of the warrior is opened,

and the woman's breast of the wounded Clorinda is seen.

Bancal wrote a tender and affectionate letter to Roland, in which he spoke of this projected union: "It will make the charm of our life, and we will not be useless to our fellow-creatures." Roland was then in Lyons, and sent the letter to his wife. She was alone in the country; the summer had been very dry, and the heat was intense, though it was already October. Frequent claps of thunder had not ceased for several days. Storm in heaven and on the earth, storm of the passions, storm of the Revolution. Great troubles without doubt were advancing a flood of unknown events which would overthrow hearts and destinies; in these moments, full of expectation, man willingly believed that it was for him that God thundered.

Madame Roland scarcely read the letter, when she burst into tears. She sat down without knowing what she wrote; and described to him her troubles, not even hiding that she was weeping. It was but a tender confession; but, at the same time, this excellent and courageous woman, though her heart was bursting, made the effort to

write the following words: "No, I am not certain of your happiness, and I will never pardon myself for having disturbed it. I thought I saw you attach yourself to means which I think false, to a hope which I ought to interdict." The remainder of the letter is a touching mélange of virtue, passions and contradictions; every now and then, melancholy and dark conjectures of the future may be observed: "When will we see you again? A question which I often ask myself and which I dare not solve. But why seek to penetrate the future which nature wishes to hide from us? Let us leave it then under the thick veil which conceals it, since it is not given us to penetrate it; we have but a kind of influence over the future; that it is great there can be no doubt: it is by the wise employment of the present that we prepare the happiness of the future." And further: "Twenty-four hours have not passed this week in which thunder has not been heard. It is roaring now; I love the coloring it gives our fields; it is august and dark; it seems terrible, but it does not alarm me."

Bancal was wise and good. He was so sad, that in spite of the winter, he went to England,

and remained there a long time. Do I dare to say, that it was a longer time, perhaps, than Madame Roland would have wished? Such is the contradiction of even the most virtuous heart. Her letters, when read attentively, show a strong fluctuation; she withdraws, and then advances; one moment she mistrusts herself, and the next is reassured.

Who will say, had she not some secret joy when Roland's business for the city of Lyons obliged him to go to Paris—to the great centre where Bancal must necessarily return? But, in reality, it was Paris which soon turned her ideas in another direction. Her passion was changed, and she directed her attention entirely to public affairs. It was an interesting and touching thing to observe, how, after the great emotion caused by the Lyonnese confederation, at the affecting sight of the union of all in one people she was found to be weak, and yielding to individual feeling; and now this feeling, at the sight of Paris, became general, civic, and patriotic; Madame Roland returned to herself, and no longer loved anything but France.

If we were speaking about another woman, I

would say that she was saved from herself by the Revolution and the Republic, her struggles and death; her austere union with Roland was confirmed by their common participation in the events of the time. This marriage of work became a marriage of common struggles, sacrifices, and heroic efforts. Thus preserved, she reached the scaffold and glory, pure and virtuous.

She came to Paris in February, '91, on the eve of the grave moment in which the question of the Republic was being agitated; she brought to it two forces, virtue and at the same time passion. Reserved in her solitude until then for these great events, she arrived with a youthfulness of mind, and a freshness of ideas, feeling, and impressions, to rejuvenate the most decrepid politicians. They were already weary; she began to live from that day. Another mysterious thing. This pure creature, admirably protected by fate, arrived at a time when women were all powerful, at a time when duty was not sufficient, when the heart, so long restrained, began to expand. She arrived invincible, with a strength of unknown impulse. No scruples restrained her; happiness willed, personal feeling having been vanquished

or eluded, that the soul should turn itself entirely towards a grand, virtuous, and glorious object, and feeling the honor, should join and throw itself heartily on this new ocean of the Revolution and country.

That is the reason, that, this time, she was irresistible. Rousseau was almost the same, when, after his unhappy passion for Madame d'Houdetot, he fell back and returned to himself, there finding that inextinguishable flame, which encircled all the age; ours, at the distance of a hundred years, still feels the heat.

Nothing was more severe than the first *coup-d'œil* of Madame Roland over Paris. The Assembly horrified her, and she pitied her friends. Seated in the tribunes of the Assembly or of the Jacobins, she saw through every character with a penetrating eye; the falseness, cowardice, and baseness, the comedy of the constitutionals, the subterfuges, and indecision of the friends of liberty, were laid open before her. She did not at all manage Brissot, whom she liked, but whom she found timid and frivolous, Condorcet, whom she thought to be double-dealing, nor Fauchet, in whom "she saw very well that there was a

priest." She was hardly gracious to Pétion or Robespierre; whose slowness and caution did not agree very well with her impatience. Young, ardent, strong and severe, she asked from them accounts of everything, not being willing to listen to delays or obstacles; she called upon them to be men and to act as such.

At the sad spectacle of a liberty foreseen to be unfortunate, and, according to her, already lost, she wanted to return to Lyons; "she wept tears of blood. There must, she said, be another insurrection (5th May), or our happiness and misery are lost to us; but I doubt if there is enough vigor in the people. Even the civil war, horrible as it is, will hasten the regeneration of our characters and manners. We must be ready for anything, even to die without regret."

The generation, of which Madame Roland so easily despaired, had the valuable gifts of faith in progress, sincere desire for the happiness of mankind, and ardent love for public good; they astonished the world by the greatness of their sacrifices. However, it must be confessed, that at this time when position did not yet command with an imperious force, those characters, formed

under the old *régime*, had not yet announced themselves under a masculine and severe aspect. Courage of mind was wanting. The example of genius was not yet found in any person; I do not even except Mirabeau, in spite of his gigantic talent.

It must also be observed, that the men of that time, had already written, spoken and discussed, to an enormous extent. What piled-up heaps of works, discussions and events! What rapid reforms! What a remodelling of the world! The life of the principal men of the Assembly and press, was so laborious, that it seems to us a problem; two sittings of the Assembly, with no other intermission than the sittings of the Jacobins and other clubs, until eleven or twelve o'clock at night; then discourses to prepare for the next day; the articles, business, intrigues and sittings of different committees; and the cabals of different politicians. The immense outburst of the first moment, and unbounded hope, enabled them at the beginning to support all this. The exertions and work continued, without end or limit; and they were forced to give in a little. This generation was no longer full of mind

and strength; however sincere were its convictions, it had not the youth, or freshness of mind, the first outburst of faith.

In the midst of the universal hesitation in politics, of June 22d, Madame Roland did not hold back. She wrote, and made the provinces write, against the weak and feeble address of the Jacobins, that primary assemblies should demand a general convocation: "In order to deliberate by *yes* or *no* if it was better to keep the ancient form of monarchical government." On the 24th, she proved very well, "that all regency was impossible, and that Louis XVI. must be superseded," etc.

All or nearly all drew back, and hesitated, still wavering. They balanced the considerations of interest and fitness, they were waiting and calculating on each other. Camille Desmoulins said, "that there were not more than twelve republicans of us in '89." They had greatly increased in '91, thanks to the journey of Varennes, and an immense number were republicans without knowing it; they wanted some one to tell them. Madame Roland marched at the head of the advance guard; and she threw into the undecided balance the sword of gold, her courage and idea of right.

CHAPTER XVI.

MADAME ROLAND (Continued).

If we judge from the letters of Madame Roland, written at this time, she was much more violent than she appeared to be later. She says, in her peculiar manner: "The fall of the throne is interwoven with the destiny of empires. The king must be tried. It is a cruel thought, that we can only be regenerated by blood."

The massacre of the Champ de Mars (July, '91), where those who demanded the republic were shot on the altar, appeared to her as the death of liberty. She showed the most touching interest in Robespierre, when it was thought that he was in danger. She went, at eleven o'clock at night, to the street Saintonge au Marais where he lived, to offer him an asylum. But he was staying with the cabinet-maker Duplay, in the street Saint Honoré. From there, M. and Ma-

dame Roland went to Buzot to entreat him to defend Robespierre at the Assembly. Buzot refused; but Grégoire who was present, undertook it.

They had come to Paris about some affairs of the town of Lyons. Having obtained what they wanted, they returned to their solitude. Immediately afterwards (September 27, '91), Madame Roland wrote a very beautiful letter to Robespierre, Spartan and sentimental, honest, yet at the same time flattering. This letter, a little wire-drawn, breathes perhaps slight calculating and politic intentions. It was plain that she was astonished at the wonderful elasticity with which the Jacobin engine, far from being broken, was spreading itself over all France, and at the great political *rôle* of the man who found himself the centre of the society. I extract the following passages:—

"Even when I followed in the papers the course of the legislative body, I distinguished the small courageous number of men, who were faithful to their principles, and amongst those men were those whose energy had not ceased, etc. I wanted to confess an attachment and

gratefulness to these chosen few. (Here follow very elevated subjects. So good, like God, without wishing any recompense.) The small number of minds capable of great things, are so scattered over the surface of the earth, and governed by circumstances, that they can never be united to move in concert. (She gracefully speaks of her child, and nature always sad. She sketches the desolate landscape, the extraordinary drought, the aristocratic Lyons. In the country, Roland was thought aristocratic, and they cried *à la lanterne*, etc.) You have done much, Monsieur, to explain and spread the principles. It is beautiful and consoling to be able to render one's self such a testimony, at a time when so many others do not know to what career they are destined. If I had not thought that you would be pleased at hearing news of two persons, whose minds are fitted to understand yours, and who love to express for you an esteem which they accord to but few persons, an attachment which is only confessed to those who place above everything the glory of being just, and the happiness of being sensible, I would have abstained from writing to you. M. Roland has rejoined me, fatigued and sorrowful, etc."

We do not find that he made any answer to these advances. Between a Girondist and a Jacobin, there was a difference, not a casual, but a natural, innate difference of kind; it was like the instinctive hatred between a dog and wolf. Madame Roland, in particular, by her brilliant and masculine qualities, frightened Robespierre. Both of them had what would seem to draw men together, but which, in reality, creates the greatest antipathy between them: *having the same fault.* Under the heroism of the one, and the admirable perseverance of the other, there was one common, and we may say ridiculous, fault. They were always writing; *they were born scribes.* We find that they were occupied, as much by the style as by the subject; they wrote night and day, living and dying; in the most terrible crises, and even when under the axe, the pen and the style were for them an all-engrossing thought. They were true children of the eminently literary and *bellétriste* (as the Germans say) eighteenth century; they preserved this character in the tragedies of another epoch. Madame Roland, with a tranquil heart, wrote, corrected, and compiled her admirable sketches, whilst the public criers were shout-

ing: "The death of the woman Roland," under the windows. Robespierre, on the eve of the 9th Thermidor, between thoughts of assassination and the scaffold, rounded his periods, less anxious, it seemed, to live, than to remain a good writer.

From this time, as politicians and authors, they did not like each other. Besides, Robespierre had too just an idea, a too perfect understanding of the unity of life necessary to great laborers, to connect himself with this woman, this queen. What would have been the life of a friend of Madame Roland? Either obedience or storms.

M. and Madame Roland did not return to Paris until '92, when the position of affairs, by the imminent fall of the throne, brought the Girondists to the conduct of affairs. Madame Roland, in the gilded *salons* of the Minister of the Interior, was the same as in her rustic solitude, except that the seriousness, strength, reserve and masculine power, which were natural to her, appeared to others as hauteur, and made her many enemies. It is false that she gave places; but, on the contrary, it is true that she drove away the solicitors by her harsh comments on their petitions.

The two ministries of Roland belong to history rather than biography. The loyalty of the minister and his wife have been inculpated from some expressions in his letter to the king.

Roland, republican minister to the king, who each day felt himself more and more out of place at the Tuileries, had entered this fatal place on the positive condition that a secretary, expressly declared *ad hoc*, should write the deliberations and motions, each day from beginning to end, in order that he should witness them, so that, in case of treachery, each measure being divided and clearly defined, the exact amount of responsibility belonging to each one could easily be seen. The promise was not held to; the king not wishing it. Roland then adopted the means of protecting himself. Knowing that publicity is the soul of a free State, he published in the *Thermomètre*, a daily paper, everything which was useful, which he could glean from the decisions of the council; on the other side, he drew up, by means of his wife's pen, a frank, rapid, and powerful letter, to give to the king and to the public, if the king deceived him afterwards.

This letter was not confidential. It did not in

the least promise secrecy, notwithstanding what had been said. It was addressed to France as much as to the king, and said, in proper terms, that Roland would not have had recourse to this means but for the want of the secretary and the register which could testify for him.

It was brought forward again by Roland, on the 24th of June, the same day when the court brought a new means to work against the Assembly, namely, a menacing petition, in which they falsely said, in the name of eight thousand pretended National Guards, that the calling of twenty thousand confederates from the provinces was an outrage to the National Guard of Paris.

On the 11th and 12th, the king not mentioning the letter, Roland took upon himself to read it aloud to the council. This truly eloquent protestation was the highest avowal of republican loyalty, nevertheless showing to the king the last door of escape. There are harsh words, and noble, and kind ones also; it was sublime. "No! country is not a word; it is a being to which sacrifices are made, to which we are attached every day by the solicitude it causes us, which has been created by mighty efforts, which is raised

in the midst of anxieties, and which is loved as much for what it costs, as for what we hope from it." Grave warnings follow, and too true prophecies, on the terrible chances of a struggle, which would force the Revolution to end in blood. This letter had all the success which the author could have hoped. It caused his dismissal.

We have elsewhere mentioned the faults of the second ministry of Roland, his hesitation whether to remain in Paris or to leave it at the approach of our invasion, the maladresse with which Robespierre was attacked by so frivolous a man as Louvet, and impolitic firmness with which they repulsed the advances of Danton. When reproached with not having hastened the sale of the national property, and having left France in such peril without money, Roland made great efforts to exonerate himself; but the Girondist administrations of the provinces turned a deaf ear to the injunctions, and the most pressing summons.

From September, 1792, M. and Madame Roland ran the greatest peril of life and honor. Their enemies did not dare to use the poniard,

but employed more cruel arms, calumny. In December, 1792, an intriguant, named Viard, went to see Chabot and Marat, and did all in his power to make them seize the threads of a great Girondist plot; Roland and his wife being among them. Marat seized the bait with the eagerness of the shark; like this ferocious fish, who swallows, with equal indifference, the stones and iron thrown to him. Chabot was very frivolous, a gull, if one may say so, with wit, yet little sense, and still less delicacy, he was in a hurry to believe, but not to examine. The Convention lost a day in examining and disputing, doing themselves much injury. They did Viard the honor of causing him to be brought, and saw very well, that the respectable witness, produced by Chabot and Marat, was a spy who was probably working for both parties. Madame Roland was called, and listened to. She touched the Assembly by her grace, reason, and words full of sense, modesty, and tact. Chabot was overwhelmed, Marat was so furious, that in the evening he wrote in his paper, that all had been arranged by the Rolandists to mystify the patriots, and render them ridiculous.

The 2d June, when the greater part of the Girondists fled or hid themselves, the bravest, without any comparison, were the Rolands, who did not deign either to decamp or change their abode. Madame Roland feared neither prison nor death; she feared nothing so much as personal insult, and never slept without putting a pistol under her pillow, so as always to command her fate. Hearing that the Commune had issued a decree against Roland, she hastened to the Tuileries, with the heroic (rather than reasonable) idea of crushing the accusers, to stun the Mountain with her eloquence and courage, and to force from the Assembly the liberty of her husband. She herself was arrested during the night. The description of the scene ought to be read in her admirable memoirs, which have often been believed to have been written by the poniard of Cato rather than the pen of a woman. But every word, forced from the feeling of a mother, every touching allusion to the irreproachable friendship, every moment, shows that this great being was a woman, that this great soul, notwithstanding its strength of character, was not the less tender.

She made no efforts to escape the arrest, and

came in her turn to lodge at the Conciergerie, near the cell of the queen, under these vaults scarcely left by Vergniaud and Brissot, and which are yet peopled by their shades. She went there royally and heroically, having, like Vergniaud, thrown away the poison, desiring to die in broad daylight. She wanted to honor the Republic by her courage at the tribunal, and firmness in death. Those that saw her at the Conciergerie said that she was still beautiful, charming, and young, at thirty-nine years old; a lasting and strong youth, the treasures of a good life, shone in her beautiful eyes. Her strength, particularly, appeared in her reasoning sweetness, and in the irreproachable harmony of her appearance and words. Whilst in prison she amused herself writing to Robespierre, not to ask anything, but to give him a lesson. She handed it to the tribunal, when they commanded her to be silent. The 8th November, the day of her death, was very cold. The trees presented a mournful appearance, stripped of their foliage; they but accorded with the hearts of the people; the Revolution also died in its winter, in the death of its illusions. When she arrived in front of the colossal

statue of Liberty, placed near the scaffold, at the place now occupied by the obelisk, between the two gardens, stripped of their foliage, at the close of the day (about half-past five), slowly ascending the scaffold, and turning towards the statue, addressed it in a grave, mild, yet not reproachful tone: "Oh, liberty! how many crimes have been committed in thy name!"

She, who was the glory of her party and husband, had not a little contributed to the destruction of both. She involuntarily overclouded Roland in the future. But she herself rendered him justice, for she had a sort of religious veneration for this old, enthusiastic and austere mind. When, at one time, she had an idea of poisoning herself, she wrote to him, excusing herself from disposing of her life without his consent. She knew that Roland had but one weakness, and that was his violent love for her, so much the more deep as that he kept it within himself.

When sentenced, she said: "Roland will kill himself." It was found impossible to conceal his death. He withdrew near Rouen, and with some ladies, sure friends, he concealed himself, but desiring all trace of him to be lost, he left there.

The old man, at this season, did not go very far. He took a miserable diligence, which went very slowly; the roads of 1793 being but quagmires. He did not arrive at the borders of the Eure until the evening. In the destruction of all police, robbers traversed the roads, and even attacked farms. This disturbed Roland so much that he did not go as far as he intended. He left the carriage and public road, following a path which led to a chateau; he stopped at the foot of an oak, and drawing his sword-cane pierced himself through and through. His name was found on him, and these words: "Respect the remains of an upright man." The future had not belied him. He died possessing the esteem of his adversaries, especially of Robert Lindet.*

* We cannot resist the pleasure of copying the portrait of Madame Roland drawn by Limontez:—

"I had seen Madame Roland several times before 1789; her eyes, figure, and hair were remarkable, and her delicate complexion had a freshness of color, which, joined to a reserved yet candid air, made her appear singularly young. I did not see in her the easy gracefulness of a Parisian, which she attributed to herself in her memoirs; I do not mean to say that she was awkward, because what is simple and natural, can never want grace. I remember that the first time I saw her, she realized my idea of the granddaughter of Vevay, who turned so many heads, and of the Julie of J. J. Rousseau;

and when I heard her speak, the illusion was still more complete. Madame Roland spoke even too well. Self-love would have liked to have found some preparation in what she said; but it was impossible: it was simply a too perfect nature. Wit, good sense, propriety of expression, lively argument, and simple grace, all these flowed without study from between those ivory teeth and rosy lips; all power must yield to them. During the Revolution I saw Madame Roland but once; it was at the commencement of her husband's first ministry. She had lost nothing of her freshness, youthfulness, and simplicity; her husband looked like a Quaker, and her father; and her child flew around her with beautiful hair falling to her waist; it seemed as if the inhabitants of Pennsylvania had been introduced into the salons of M. de Calonne. Madame Roland talked of nothing but public affairs, and I could see that my moderation filled her with pity. Her mind was exalted, but it still retained its mild and inoffensive tone. Though the grand fall of the monarchy had not then taken place, she did not conceal that symptoms of anarchy had commenced to dawn, and she foretold a death combat. I well remember the calm and resolute voice with which she told me that she would, if it was necessary, leave her head on the scaffold; and I confess that the thought of this charming head, abandoned to the axe of the executioner, made an impression which is not yet effaced, for the fury of parties had not then accustomed us to these frightful sights. Thus, at the last, the prodigious firmness of Madame Roland, and the heroism of her death, did not surprise me. All was in accord—there was nothing false in this celebrated woman; she was not only the strongest, but the bravest, character of our Revolution; history will not disdain her, and other nations envied us the possession of her."

CHAPTER XVII.

MADEMOISELLE KIRALIO (MADAME ROBERT). (17TH JULY, 1791.)

THE first act of the Revolution, the famous petition of the Champ de Mars not to recognise *either Louis XVI. or any other king*, this act, improvised in the midst of the crowd on the altar of the country (16th July, '91), and which still exists in the archives of the department of the Seine, was written by the cordelier Robert.

His wife, Madame Robert (Mademoiselle Kiralio), told Madame Roland of it in the evening. And the act witnessed for itself. The writing of Robert may be plainly recognized, he having been one of the first signers.

Robert was a large man, with no ease of manner, and more patriotism than talent. His wife, on the contrary, was a well-known authoress, and indefatigable journalist, with a lively, rapid, and

excitable mind; she very probably dictated to him.

This petition was very remarkable; it was really improvised. The Jacobins were opposed to it. Even the Girondist Brissot, who desired the fall of the king, had written the rough copy of a timid petition, which divided the Cordeliers. Some of the ring-leaders of the Cordeliers were arrested in the morning, and others hid themselves, endeavoring to escape. It was soon found that Danton, Desmoulins, Fréron and Legendre, being absent, the Cordeliers and Robert, who would otherwise have been but secondary, found themselves in the first place, and even took the lead.

Little Madame Robert, cunning, spirituelle and proud (according to Madame Roland), and above all very ambitious, becoming impatient of remaining for so long a time in the obscure position of a female who writes for her living, seized upon this occasion. I have no doubt that she dictated, and the coarse Robert wrote.

The style seems to betray the author. The discourse is interrupted, like a person panting for breath. Several happy faults, of little outbursts

darted forth (like the anger of a woman, or that of a humming-bird) shows clearly enough a feminine hand. "But, gentlemen, representatives of a generous and confiding people, remember," etc., etc.

In the morning Madame Roland went to the Champ de Mars in order to foresee the turn affairs were taking. She returned, firmly believing that there was nothing to do. The evening before, she had seen the Jacobin Hall invaded by a strange crowd who, many believed, and not without reason, had been paid by the Orleanists, who were anxious to turn to their profit the republican movement.

Then it was that the Cordeliers alone, M. and Madame Robert especially, who remained on the Champ de Mars in the midst of the people, writing for it, took the bold step, by which the Girondists, and then the Jacobins, soon profited. Who was this Madame Robert (Mademoiselle Kéralio)?

Her father was a Breton, but she was born in Paris in 1758, and was now thirty-three years old. She was a literary woman, we might almost say a *savante*, brought up by her father, a

member of the Academy of Inscriptions. Guinement de Kéralio, Chevalier of Saint-Louis, had been appointed, in conjunction with Condillac, to undertake the education of the prince of Parma. Professor of tactics in the military school, and inspector of a provincial one, he had amongst his pupils the young Corsican Bonaparte. His allowance not sufficing for the support of his family, he wrote for the *Mercure* and the *Journal des Savants*, and translated a great deal. Mademoiselle Kéralio was scarcely seventeen when she was translating and compiling. At eighteen, she wrote a novel (*Adelaïde*) of which nobody knew the author. Then, she devoted ten years to a graver work, *The History of Elizabeth*, which was full of study and research. But, unfortunately, this great work was not finished until '89; it was too late; history was acted instead of read. The father and daughter quickly turned to things of the time. Mademoiselle Kéralio soon became an editress, and corrected the *Journal de l'Etat et du Citoyen*. Her father was instructor of the national guard, under La Fayette. It is easy to see that neither of them obtained much profit. He had lost the place which sup-

ported them, when his daughter, just in the nick of time, found a husband.

This husband was the Cordelier Robert, who, from '90, strongly opposed to the La Fayette party, wrote the *Republicanism adapted to France*, boldly following the call of Camille Desmoulins. Mademoiselle Kéralio, nobly born, and brought up amongst the members of the old *régime*, threw herself with transport into the movement. By her marriage she was brought into the hotbed of Parisian agitation, the Cordeliers' Club. The day when the chiefs of the Cordeliers were either arrested or in flight, leaving their dangerous post at the altar of their country, she was there, and acting; and, through the instrumentality of her husband's hand, made the act decisive.

The thing was not without its peril. Though they had not foreseen the massacre committed in the evening by the royalists and La Fayette's soldiers, the Champ de Mars had been witness, in the morning, of a very tragical scene, a fatal jest which ended in a bloody act. However sad and shameful may be the detail, we cannot suppress it; it is too closely connected with our subject.

The gentlemen royalists were great humorists.

In the *Acts of the Apostles* and elsewhere, their enemies were found to be inexhaustible subjects of caricature. They amused themselves especially with the eclipse of the Cordelier chiefs, and of the blows which many of them received from the Fayettiste band. The royalists of a lower class, such as porters and hair-dressers, had their farces also; they had dramatized, when they dared, the events of the Revolution. The hair-dressers especially, ruined by the public outbreaks, were furious royalists. Agents and messengers of pleasure, under the old *régime*, they were the necessary witnesses of the present scenes of the alcove, and were generally libertines on their own account. On Saturday, the evening before the 17th July, one of them entertained an idea which could only have sprung from the brain of an idle libertine. This was to establish himself under the planks of the country's altar, and look up the petticoats of the women. Hoops were not worn then, but the petticoats were very large behind. The haughty republicans, red-capped tribunes, orators of the clubs, Roman ladies and literary women, would mount proudly. The hair-dresser found a jester to see (or to ima-

gine), and then make caricatures. False or not, the thing was quickly seized upon by the royalists; the tone of conversation was very free, even amongst great ladies. The Memoirs of Lauzun fill us with surprise at the things they dare say before the queen. The readers of Faublas and worse books would have, without doubt, received these shameless descriptions with avidity. The hair-dresser, like Lutrin's, wanted a comrade, in order to make himself more secure in his deeds of darkness, and chose a brave, but invalided old soldier, not less a royalist, and a libertine. They took some food, and a barrel of brandy, and in the night went to the Champ de Mars, raised a plank and descended, adroitly replacing it. Then, by means of a gimlet, they pierced several holes. July nights being short, it was already daylight before they had finished their work. The long expected day awoke many people, and poverty also, who came in hopes of selling something to the crowd; a woman selling cakes and lemonade, stole a march on the others, and, whilst waiting, was roaming over the country's altar. She felt the gimlet under her foot, and being afraid, cried out. An apprentice was already on the ground,

tediously copying the patriotic inscriptions. He ran and called the Gros-Caillou guard, who would not stir; he then hastened to the Hôtel de Ville, and conducted the men to the place. Some workmen, taking apart the planks, found the two sinners, looking rather foolish, pretending to sleep. This was a bad business for them; there was no jesting then at the country's altar; at Brest an officer had perished for having laughed at it. This was an aggravated circumstance; they confessed their villany. The population of Gros-Caillou were nearly all washer-women, who could be very rude, armed with their beetles, which sometimes had had their day in the disturbances and revolts of the Revolution. These ladies did not very well receive the confession of an outrage to women. On the other side, several rumors were spread amongst the crowd, that they had been promised life-annuities, if they would attempt an outbreak. The barrel of brandy, passing from mouth to mouth, became a barrel of powder; then, it was said: "That they wished to blow up the people." The guard was no longer able to defend them; they were dragged off, and murdered; then, to frighten the aristo-

crats, they cut off their heads, and carried them into Paris. About half-past eight or nine, they reached the Palais Royal.

Almost immediately afterwards, the agitated and indignant Assembly, who were very skilfully directed by the royalists against the republican petition which had been foreseen and feared, had declared, "That those who, *by* individual and collective *writings*, should incite the people to resist, were guilty of *lése-nation*." The petition was thus found to be identified with the assassination of the morning, and all meetings were threatened to be considered as a reunion of assassins. From time to time the President, Charles de Lameth, wrote to the municipality to desire them to unfurl the red flag and order out the national guard against the petitioners of the Champ de Mars.

The mob were, in reality, very inoffensive. An ocular witness says that there were more women than men; even amongst the signers, the greater number were women and girls. This Sunday, they were, without doubt, leaning on the arms of their fathers, brothers, and husbands. Believers in a kind faith, they wanted to witness,

and join with them, in this great act, the importance of which several amongst them did not understand. But no matter; they remained courageous and faithful, which they often testified by their blood.

The number of signatures was truly immense. The names on the paper, which still remains, amount to many thousands. But it is plain to be seen that many of the leaves have been lost. The last is numbered fifty. This intense eagerness of the people to sign an act so hostile to the king, and severe to the Assembly, ought to have frightened them. One of the copies, which was circulated, was, no doubt, brought to them, and this sovereign assembly, until now judge and arbitrator between the king and the people, saw, with terror, that they had passed to the rank of the accused. At any risk, the meeting must be dissolved, and the petition destroyed. This was, most certainly, the thought, I do not say of the whole assembly, but that of the leaders, who controlled the rest. They pretended to have learned that the crowd of the Champ de Mars wanted to march against the Assembly, certainly an unlikely thing, and positively contradicted by what ocular

witnesses, who are still living, relate of the position of the people. That there were some fools amongst the number, who were ready to propose the expedition, is not impossible; but they had not the least influence on the crowd, which had become immense, a thousand different elements being mingled together, forming a mass of ungovernable and of inoffensive people. The villagers on the outskirts, knowing nothing of these events, had marched in, especially those of the west, Vaugirard, Issy, Sèvres, Saint Cloud, Boulogne, etc. They came, expecting a fête; and once at the Champ de Mars, they had no idea of leaving it; and on a day of such intense heat, they were seeking a little shade, and resting themselves under the large surrounding trees, or else in the circle, around the large pyramid, formed by the altar of the country.

Meanwhile, a last and thundering message had come from the Assembly to the Hôtel de Ville, about four o'clock; and, at the same time, a rumor coming from the same source, was spread on the Grève, over the whole of which were paid troops: "A troop of fifty thousand brigands was posted

in the Champ de Mars, and was going to march against the Assembly."

The municipality resisted no longer, and the red flag was unfurled. The Mayor Bailly, who was very pale, proceeded to the Grève, marching at the head of a column of the National Guard. Lafayette followed another path.

I give the unpublished recital of a creditable witness, who was a National Guard, and went to the Champ de Mars, following the Faubourg Saint Antoine.

"The appearance which this immense place presented, struck us with astonishment. We expected to see it occupied by a furious populace; we only found the pacific population of Sunday-walkers, assembled in groups of families, and for the most part composed of women and children, amongst whom were mingled the sellers of cocoa, gingerbread, and Nanterre cakes, then in much demand as a novelty.

"There was no one armed, except some National Guards, in their uniforms and with their sabres; but the greater part were accompanied with their wives, and had nothing menacing in their aspect. The security was so great that

several of our companions piled their arms, and some, excited by curiosity, went to the centre of the Champ de Mars. Interrogated on their return, they said there was nothing new, except that the people were signing a petition upon the platform of the country's altar.

"This altar was to the immense height of a hundred feet; it was supported on four foundations, which occupied the angles of the vast quadrangle, and supported tripods of colossal height. These foundations were connected by two staircases, of such width that an entire battalion could march up abreast. Above the platform to which they lead, rising pyramidally, by a multitude of steps, was another platform, which was crowned by the country's altar, shaded by a palm tree.

"The often traversed steps on the four sides, from the base to the summit, had served as seats to the exhausted crowd, fatigued by a long walk, and the heat of a July sun. Thus, when we arrived, this great monument resembled a moving mountain, formed of human beings piled one on top of the other. We, none of us, saw then that

the edifice raised for a fête would be changed into a bloody scaffold."

Neither Bailly or Lafayette were bloodthirsty men. They had given a general order to employ force *in case of resistance.* Circumstances carried everything before them; the paid National Guard (a kind of gendarmerie) reached the centre of the Champ de Mars (from the side of the Gros Caillou), when, *it was said*, that on the other side the mayor had been fired upon. The fact was, that a shot had come from a group of children and excited men, and had wounded a dragoon, standing near the mayor.

They said—but who are *they?* the royalists, without doubt, perhaps the hair-dressers, who were assembled in great number, and armed to the teeth, to avenge their comrade who had been killed in the morning.

The paid guard waited for nothing; and, without inquiring into the truth of this *on dit*, advanced swiftly to the Champ de Mars, and fired upon their country's altar, covered with women and children. Robert and his wife escaped unhurt. It was either they or their friends, the Cordeliers, who, under fire, collected the scat-

tered leaves of the petition, of which we still possess a part.

They flew to Madame Roland in the evening. We must read her recital. Her excessive bitterness shows too plainly the great timidity of the Girondist policy: "After leaving the Jacobins, I returned home at eleven o'clock, and found M. and Madame Robert, who said to me, with the confidence of old friends: 'We have come to ask an asylum; it does not take long to find out the frankness of your character, and your patriotism. My husband wrote the petition on the country's altar; I was at his side—we escaped the butchers, without daring either to go home or to our known friends, where they would come and seek us.' 'I am much obliged to you,' I replied, 'to have thought of me at so sad a time; I am proud to receive all the persecuted, but you will be but poorly concealed here (I was at the hotel Britannique, rue Guénégaud); this house is much frequented, and the landlord is a strong partisan of Lafayette. We will talk no more about it to-night, and to-morrow we will find you a retreat.' I told the mistress of the hotel that the wife of one of my relations, having arrived

in Paris in the midst of the tumult, had left her baggage in the diligence, and would pass the night with me; at the same time desiring her to place two camp-bedsteads in my apartment. These were made up in the parlor where the men slept, and Madame Robert slept in my husband's bed, near mine, in my chamber. The next morning, at an early hour, I hastened to write to my distant friends, informing them of what had passed the evening before. M. and Madame Robert, who, I thought would have been very active, carrying on an extensive correspondence as editors, slowly dressed themselves, and sat chattering after the breakfast, which I caused to be brought them, and went on the balcony looking over the street; they even went so far as to call to them, out of the window, a passer-by of their acquaintance. I thought that this conduct was very inconsistent for people who were hiding themselves. The person whom they had called related to them with a great deal of warmth, the events of the evening before, and boasted of having run his sabre through the body of a National Guard; he spoke very loud, in a room near a large ante-chamber, which was in commu-

nication with another ante-chamber, and my own. I called to Madame Robert, and said: 'I have received you, Madame, with the interest which justice and humanity inspire in me for good people in danger; but I cannot give an asylum to all your acquaintance: you expose yourself to entertain, as you have done in such a house as this, some person of but little discretion; I habitually receive the deputies, who would risk being compromised, if they were seen to enter at the same time with such a person as was here just now, who glories in committing yesterday such acts of violence; I pray you to ask him to retire.' Madame Robert called her husband, and I repeated my observations in a more elevated tone, because the person, appearing very stupid, seemed to me to need some strong suggestion; they showed the man out. I learned that he was called Vachard, and was president of a society called the Indigents; they said he was celebrated for his excellent qualities and ardent patriotism. I groaned within myself at the price which must be attached to the patriotism of an individual who had all the appearance of one who is called a hot-headed person, and whom I had taken for a blackguard. I

afterwards found that he was a *colporteur* for one of Marat's papers, and did not know how to read or write, yet is now administrator to the department of Paris, where he figures very well among his equals."

"It was noon, and M. and Madame Robert talked about going home, where everything would be in disorder: and for that reason I told them that if they would accept my soup before going, I would have it at an early hour; they replied that they would rather go and return. They then returned before three o'clock, having made their toilette; the wife had large feathers and a good deal of rouge; the husband had on a suit of sky-blue silk clothes, with his black hair falling in large ringlets. Both presented a singular appearance. A long sword at his side added another remarkable feature to his costume. Are these people fools? I asked myself. I listened attentively to their talk, to assure myself if they had not lost their mind. The fat Robert ate wonderfully, and she chatted on perfectly at her ease. They left me after dinner, and I never saw them again, or spoke of them to anybody."

"On returning to Paris, the following winter,

Robert, meeting Roland at the Jacobins, reproached him mildly and politely, complaining at there being no intimacy between us. His wife had visited me several times, and invited me, in the most pressing manner, to come to her house twice a week, where I would find assembled, men of the greatest merit in the legislature: I went once, and saw Antoine, whose mediocrity I knew; he was a small man, and good in small things—writing pretty verses, and pleasant nothings. I saw several patriotic deputies of the same character, and about as decent as Chabot; some women, very warm in civism, and honorable members of the fraternal society, completed a circle which did not suit me at all. Some months after, Roland was called to the ministry; twenty-four hours had scarcely elapsed after his nomination before I saw Madame Robert enter: "Ah! so your husband has a place; patriots ought to help each other; I hope that you will not forget me.' 'It will give me much pleasure, Madame, to be useful to you; but I am ignorant how that could be, and M. Roland will certainly not neglect anything for the public interest, in employing capable persons.' Four days after Madame Ro-

bert paid me a morning visit, and a few days after that still another visit, all accompanied with great entreaties on the necessity of giving her husband an office, his patriotism entitling him to a place. I told Madame Robert that the Minister of the Interior had no office under his nomination, except those of his bureau, which were all filled; that, in spite of the necessity he would be in of changing some agents, he must have a cautious man, to study people and things, before making all these changes, so as not to fetter the course of business; and finally, after what she had told me herself, her husband would not like a clerk's place.' 'Indeed, Robert is made for better than that.' 'In that case, the Minister of the Interior can do nothing for you.' 'But cannot he speak to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, so that he may give some mission to Robert?' 'I think that M. Roland's reserve will not permit him to solicit anybody, and he never mingles with the department of his colleagues; but probably as you only expect a testimony to be rendered to the civism of your husband, I will speak of it to mine.'

"Madame Robert followed up Dumouriez and

Brissot, and after three weeks, returned to say that she had had the promise of the first, and wanted me to remind him of it when I should see him.

"During the week he dined at our house; Brissot and some others were there. Addressing the former, I said: 'Have you constantly promised a certain very pressing lady, to give her husband a place? She has desired me to remind you of it; and her activity is so great, that I was very glad to calm it towards me, by promising to do what she desired me.' 'Are you not talking of Robert?' Brissot immediately asked—'You are right.' 'Ah!' said he, addressing Dumouriez with the good nature which characterizes him, 'you ought to give this man an office; he is a sincere friend of the Revolution, and a warm patriot; he is not happy; the reign of liberty ought to be useful to those who love it.' 'What!' interrupted Dumouriez with as much vivacity as gayety, 'are you talking to me about this little man with a black head, as consequential as one twice his size? By my faith, I have no desire to do dishonor to myself. I would not send such a fool anywhere.' 'But,' replied Brissot, 'amongst the

agents which you employ, all have not need of the same capacity.' 'Eh! do you know Robert well?' asked Dumouriez. 'I know Kéralio very well, the father of his wife, a highly praiseworthy man. I have met Robert at his house; I know that he has committed some irregularities; but I believe him to be honest, having a good heart, filled with civism, and has a great desire of being employed.' 'I will not employ a fool like that.' 'I would give him a place rather inferior to the thousand crowns salary which he wanted.' 'Do you know what he asked me for? ambassador to Constantinople!'—'Ambassador to Constantinople! that is impossible,' said Brissot, laughing. 'This is the thing'—'I have nothing more to say'—'Neither have I,' added Dumouriez, 'except that I rolled this cask to the street, which is in front of my house, and have forbidden his wife an entrance to it.'

"Again Madame Robert came to me; I wanted to rid myself of her entirely, without any outburst; and could only employ means prompted by my frankness. She complained a good deal of the slowness of Dumouriez; I told her that I had spoken to him, but that I ought not to hide

from her that she had enemies, who were spreading unpleasant rumors about her; that I thought she had better trace them to the fountain-head so as to destroy them, in order that a public man should not expose himself to the reproaches of the malevolent, in employing a person who was surrounded by unfavorable prejudices; that it only needed explanations, which I invited her to make. Madame Robert went to Brissot, who, with his usual ingenuousness, told her that it was folly to ask an embassy, and with such pretensions she would finish by obtaining nothing. We saw no more of her; but her husband wrote a pamphlet against Brissot, denouncing him as a distributer of places and a forger, who had promised him the embassy to Constantinople, and then retracting what he had said. He turned to the Cordeliers, connected himself with Danton, and was his clerk until the 10th August. Danton being elected minister, he managed to thrust him into the electoral body, and into the deputation from Paris to the Convention; he paid his debts, was very lavish in his expenses, often giving dinners in his house to Orleans, and a thousand others; and is rich to-day;

he calumniates Roland, and slanders his wife; but all this might have been supposed. He works at his trade and gains his wages."

This bitter and unjust portrait, proves that Madame Roland, like other great characters, has her misfortunes and weaknesses. It is materially inexact in more than one point, and most certainly in one. Robert *did not throw himself into the Cordeliers* at the end of '92, since he belonged to them from the commencement of '91, and in July, '91, he and his wife performed the boldest act which signalizes the Cordeliers in history—the original act of the Republic.

Robert was a good man, with a warm heart. He appears to have been one of those who, in the summer of '93 (in August or September), with Garat, made some advances to Robespierre, in order to save the Girondists, then lost without any hope, and whom no person could save. A trifling accident was very fatal to him. The Convention had made a very severe law against the forestalling of commodities; and Robert had been denounced to them as having a cask of rum at his house; in vain he declared that the very small barrel was for his own consumption; the

Jacobins did not the less declaim against Robert the *monopolizer*, delighted to drag down the old Cordeliers.

Notwithstanding what Madame Roland has said, neither Robert nor his wife enriched themselves. The poor woman, after, as before the Revolution, supported herself by her pen, writing for the booksellers a quantity of English translations, and every now and then novels: *Amelia and Caroline, or Love and Friendship; Alphonse and Mathilde, or the Spanish Family; Rose and Albert, or the Tomb of Emma* (1810). This is the last of her works, and probably the end of her life. All this is forgotten, even her great history of *Elizabeth*. But what will never be forgotten, is the grand stand she took for the Republic, on the 17th July, 1791.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CHARLOTTE CORDAY.

At the roll of the drum, on Sunday, the 7th of July, were united, on the immense green carpet of the field of Caen, the volunteers who had set out from Paris, *for the war of Marat.* These were thirty in all. The beautiful ladies who went there with the deputies were much surprised, and but little gratified, at this small number. One young lady, amongst them, appeared very sad; it was Mademoiselle Marie Charlotte Corday d'Armout, a young and beautiful republican, of a noble, yet impoverished family, who lived with her aunt, at Caen. Petion, who saw her several times, supposed that she had some lover, whose departure cast a shade over her countenance. He joked about it clumsily, saying: "You would be very sorrowful, would you not, if they set out?"

The Girondin, worn out, after so many stirring events, could not imagine the new and virgin feeling, the burning flame which filled this young heart. He did not know that his discourses, and those of his friends, which, in the mouths of finished men, were but discourses, became, in the heart of Mademoiselle Corday, her destiny, life and death. On this field of Caen, which could have held a hundred thousand men, where there were only thirty, she saw what no one else saw: *an abandoned country!*

Men doing so little, she thought that the hand of a woman was necessary.

Mademoiselle Corday was indeed most highly connected, being a near relation of the heroines of Corneille, Chimène, Pauline, and the sister of Horace. She was the great-great-niece of the author of *Cinna.* There was much of the sublime in her nature.

In her last letter, before her death, she made all that was in her mind to be understood; she said all in one word, which was constantly repeated: "*Peace! peace!*"

Like the Normands, and her uncle, she was reasoning and sublime; she brought forward this

argument: Law is peace. Who killed law on the 2d June? Marat, above every one else. The murderer of the law once killed, peace will again flourish. The death of one will be life to all.

Such were her constant thoughts. For her own life, which she was herself giving up, she did not think.

A true, as well as noble, thought. She saw all in one man; by cutting the thread of one life, she thought to be able, fairly and easily, to annul our unfortunate destiny, as she, an industrious girl, would cut her bobbin.

There was nothing in Mademoiselle Corday of a savage virago, who did not regard shedding human blood. On the contrary, it was to prevent it that she decided to strike this blow. She wanted to save a world, in exterminating the exterminator. She had the tender and soft heart of a woman. The act which she imposed on herself was one of pity.

In the only portrait which remains of her, and which was taken just before her death, her great mildness is presented; it presents a very different idea of the bloody remembrance which her name

recalls. It is the figure of a young Normand lady, very youthful-looking, like the apple blossom when it is opening. She was twenty-five, but appeared much younger. It seems as if we could hear her slightly infantile voice, pronounce the words which she wrote to her father, in the orthography of the drawling Normand tongue: "*Pardonnais moi, mon papa.*"

In this tragical portrait, she appears sensible, reasonable, and grave, like all the women of her country. Did she thoughtlessly adopt her fate? Not at all; there is nothing in her of false heroism. It must be remembered that there remained to her but half an hour before this terrible proof. Has she not a little of the spoiled child? I think so; looking at it attentively, a slight movement of the lips may be seen, almost a little pout. What! so little agitation at the approach of death? at the approach of the barbarous enemy, which was going to cut short this charming life, so full of love and romance. One is struck with the mild expression; the heart beats, the eyes become clouded; we must look elsewhere.

The painter has created in man an eternal regret. No one can see her without saying within

himself: "O, why was I born so late! O, how much I would have loved her! Her hair was of a pale yellow, with the most beautiful shades; her cap and dress were white. Was it a sign of her innocence, or for a visible justification? I do not know. Doubt and sadness are expressed in her eyes. Sorrow for her fate! I do not think so; but for her act, perhaps. The firmest who strikes such a blow, whatever may be his faith, at the last moment often finds strange doubt rising within him.

In examining those sad mild eyes, one thing is felt, which, perhaps, explains her fate: *she had always been alone.* Yes, this is the only thing which is little comforting in her. In this charming and good being there was one sad influence exerted: *the demon of solitude.*

Besides, she had no mother; she died when Charlotte was very young; maternal caresses had never been received by her; in her young years, she never had that woman's milk, which nothing can supply. In truth, she had no father; he was a poor country nobleman, with a utopian and romantic imagination, employing his time in writing against the abuses by which the nobility

lived, and occupied himself much with his books, and but little with his children. We can say that she had no brother. At least, the two that she had, in '92, held such completely opposite opinions to those of their sister, that they went to join the army of Condé.

Was she not still more alone, in the Abbaye-aux-Dames, at Caen, a house for the daughters of poor nobility, where she was received at the age of thirteen? It can easily be believed, when it is well known, that in these religious asylums, which ought to be the sanctuaries of Christian equality, the rich look down on the poor. There seems to have been no better place than the Abbaye-aux-Dames, in preserving the traditions of pride. Founded by Mathilda, wife of William the Conqueror, it overlooked the town, and in the effect of its Roman arches, heightened and re-heightened, it still shows in written characters, the old feudal insolence.

The soul of the young Charlotte sought its asylum at first in devotion, and the mild friendship of the cloister. She especially loved two young ladies, noble and poor, like herself. She also saw something of the world: a very worldly

society, composed of young men of the nobility, were admitted to the parlor of the convent, and the *salons* of the abbess. Their frivolity only contributed the more to withdraw the masculine heart of the young girl from the world, and increase her taste for solitude. Her real friends were books. The philosophy of the century had even made its way into the convent. She read casual and illy chosen books, Raynal *pêle mêle* with Rousseau. "Her head," says a journalist, "was a whirlpool of all sorts of reading."

She was one of those persons who can run through opinions and books with impunity, without her purity being injured in the least. In the science of good and evil, she preserved the singular gift of a childlike virgin morality. This, especially, appears in the intonation of an almost silvery infantine voice, which plainly showed that no person had ever attempted to bind her will. The features of Mademoiselle Corday might be forgotten, but her voice never. A person who heard it but once at Caen, on some unimportant occasion, ten years after had this unique voice still ringing in his ear.

This prolongation of infancy was a singularity

of Joanna d'Arc, who was always a little girl and never a woman. One thing which rendered Mademoiselle Corday's appearance so striking, and impossible to be forgotten, was, that this infantile voice was united to a grave beauty, masculine in expression, but delicate in features. This contrast made the effect double, both to fascinate and awe. They looked and approached, but in this flower of the time, there was something intimidating, which was not only of time, but of immortality. She already lived amongst those who gave their lives to live eternally.

The Girondists had no influence over her. The greater part, as we have seen, had ceased to be friends of each other. She had seen Barbaroux twice,* as a deputy from Provence, in order to

* Romantic histories never leave their heroine without attempting to prove that she had been in love. Some say that very probably Charlotte was in love with Barbaroux. Others, on the word of an old servant, have thought that a certain Franquelin, a respectable and sensible young man, had enjoyed the signal honor of being loved by Mademoiselle Corday, and costing her many tears. How little is known of human nature; of such acts the austere virginity of her heart have thought to have been capable of. If the priestess of Tauride could plunge the knife, it was because no human love had softened her heart. The most absurd of all, was that of Wimpfen, who made her at first a royalist! in love with the royalist,

give him a letter, and interest him in the affairs of one of her Provence friends.

She had also seen Fauchet, the Bishop of Calvados, whom she liked but little, and esteemed less, as an immoral priest. It is useless to mention that Mademoiselle Corday was never in connection with any priest, not confessing.

After the suppression of convents, finding that her father had married again, she took refuge in Caen, with her aunt, Madame de Breteville. And it was there she adopted her resolution.

Did she undertake it without thought? No; for a time she was restrained by the remembrance of her aunt; this good old lady, who had maintained her, and whom, in recompense, she was so cruelly going to compromise. One day her aunt discovered a tear in her eye. "I am crying," she said, "for France, my relations, and you. As long as Marat lives, who is sure of their existence?"

Belzunce! The hatred of Wimpfen for the Girondists, who repulsed his proposal to call in the English, seems to have made him crazy. He even went so far as to suppose that poor Petion, who was half dead, with a wife and children, and but one idea, wanted (think of it!) *to burn Caen*, in order afterwards to charge the Mountain with the crime! All the rest are of this kind.

She distributed her books, except a volume of Plutarch, which she took with her. In the courtyard she met the child of a workman who lodged in the house; she gave him her drawing-book, and embraced him, letting one tear fall on his cheek. Two tears! enough for nature. Charlotte Corday could not think of quitting this life without having first waited upon her father. She saw him at Argentin, and received his blessing. From there, she went to Paris, in a stage-coach, in company with some Montagnards, great admirers of Marat, who at first pretended to be in love with her, offering her their hands. She pretended to sleep, and smiled and played with a child.

She arrived in Paris on Thursday, the 11th, about noon, and went to the street Vieux Augustus, No. 17, the Hôtel de la Providence. She went to bed about five o'clock in the evening, and, being much fatigued, slept until the next morning the sleep of youth, and an easy conscience. Her sacrifice was complete, and her act was accomplished in thought; she had no more trouble or doubt.

She was so fixed in her project, that the execu-

tion of it was not hurried. She first tranquilly occupied herself with fulfilling a duty of friendship, which had served as a pretext for her journey to Paris. At Caen, she had obtained a letter from Barbaroux to his colleague Duperret, wishing, by her interposition, to draw some papers from the Minister of the Interior, useful to an emigrant friend, Mademoiselle Forbin.

In the morning, she could not find Duperret, who was in convention. She returned home, and passed the day tranquilly reading *Plutarch's Lives*, the Bible for the strong. In the evening, she again went to the deputy, and found him at table, with his anxious daughters. He obligingly promised to conduct her to the ministers the next day. She was much moved at the sight of the family which she was about to compromise, and said to Duperret in an almost supplicating voice: "Believe me; set out for Caen; fly before to-morrow evening." The same night, even while Charlotte was speaking, perhaps, Duperret was about to be proscribed, or soon to be so. He said no more to her, but the next day took her to the minister, who did not receive them, hinting

that both being suspected, he could not aid the emigrant young lady.

She only returned home to put off Duperret, who accompanied her, and immediately went out again, asking the way to the Palais Royal. In this garden, full of sun, enlivened with a joyous crowd, and amongst the gambols of the children, she sought and found a cutler, where, for forty sous, she bought a knife, fresh ground, with a bone handle, which she hid under her handkerchief.

Behold her in possession of her arm; how would she use it? She wanted the judgment which she was delivering against Marat to be executed with great solemnity. Her first idea, the one which she conceived and thought over at Caen, and brought to Paris, had been to make it a striking and dramatic scene. She wanted to kill him on the Champ de Mars, before the people, before the heavens, on the celebration of the 14th July, on the anniversary of the defeat of royalty, to kill the king of anarchy. Like a true niece of Corneille, she would have accomplished to the letter, the famous verses of Cinna:—

Demain au Capitol, il fait un sacrifice
Qu'il en soit la victime, et faisons en ces lieux,
Justice au monde entier, à la face des dieux.

The fête having adjourned, she adopted another idea, that of punishing Marat at the place of his crime, when, having destroyed national representation, he dictated the vote of the Convention, setting aside some for life, others for death. She wanted to strike the blow on the summit of the mountain. But Marat was sick, and did not go any more to the Assembly.

She must, then, go to his house, seek him at his fireside, penetrate the anxious watchfulness of those who surrounded him; she must, though it would be a painful thing, become an intimate, and deceive him. This was the only thing which had cost, or left her, a scruple or remorse.

The first note she wrote Marat was unanswered. She then wrote a second, which showed a kind of impatience, the progress of passion. She even went so far as to say "that she would disclose secrets to him; that she was persecuted and unhappy," not having the least fear of abusing pity in order to deceive one whom she was abandoning to death, as a pitiless enemy of humanity.

However, she was not obliged to commit this fault; not sending the note.

At seven o'clock in the evening of the 13th July, she went out, and taking a public carriage in the Square des Victoires, she crossed the Pont Neuf, and descended at Marat's door, No. 20, Rue des Cordeliers (now No. 18, Rue de l'Ecole de Médecine). This is the large and sad-looking house before the turret one, which stands at the corner of the street.

Marat occupied the first and darkest story of this dark house, a convenient story for an editor and popular tribune, whose house is as public as the street, for the concourse of porters, bill-stickers, the passing to and fro of proofs, and everybody going and coming. The furniture of the interior showed a strange contrast, a faithful image of the discord which characterized Marat and his destiny. The first floor was very dark, opening on the court, filled with old furniture, dirty tables on which the newspapers were folded up, gave one the idea of the dark lodging of a workman. Farther on, you are surprised to find a little parlor, opening on the street, furnished in blue and white damask, of a delicate and hand-

some color, with beautiful silk curtains and porcelain vases, generally filled with flowers. This was plainly the abode of a tender and attentive woman, who appeared to be anxious that a man, like Marat, devoted to work, should find a place of rest. This was the mystery in the life of Marat, which was afterwards disclosed by his sister; he was not in his own house; he had *no home* in this world. "Marat was at no expense," as his sister Albertine says, "for a divine woman, touched with his situation, when he was flying from cellar to cellar, took and hid in her house the friend of the people; she devoted her fortune, and sacrificed her rest to him."

A promise to marry Catherine Evrard was found among Marat's papers. He had already married her *before the sun and before nature.*

This unfortunate creature, grown old before her time, was consuming away from anxiety. She felt that death was surrounding Marat, and she watched at the door, stopping on the threshold every suspicious face.

But Mademoiselle Corday was far from appearing so; her modest appearance, as a young girl from the provinces, interceded for her. At this

time, when everything was in extreme, when a woman's dress was either neglected or cynical, the young girl seemed to come from the good old Norman stock; and she did not abuse her beauty; a green ribbon confined her superb head of hair under the well-known cap of the women of Calvados, a modest headdress, less pretentious than those of Caen.

Contrary to the custom of the times, and in spite of the heat of July, her bosom was closely covered with a silk handkerchief, securely tied behind her back. She had on a white dress, and but one luxury which showed the woman, the lace of the cap was left to float around her cheeks. And, lastly, there was no paleness, but, on the contrary, her cheeks were red, and her clear voice gave no sign of emotion.

With a firm step she crossed the first barrier, not stopping at the order of the porteress, who called after her in vain; she submitted to the but little benevolent scrutiny of Catherine, who, at the noise, had half opened the door, and wanted to prevent her entrance. The debate was heard by Marat, and the sound of that silvery and clear voice reached him. He had no dread of women,

and, though in the bath, imperiously ordered that she should enter.

The room was little, and dark; Marat in the bath, was covered with a dirty cloth, and had a board on which he was writing, only leaving his head, shoulders, and right arm free. His gray hair, covered with a handkerchief or napkin, his yellow skin, and thin limbs, and his large toad-like mouth, did not look much like a man. The young girl, as we can well believe, did not look at him. She had promised him news from Normandy—he asked for them, and especially the name of the refugee deputies at Caen, and wrote them down as she named them. Then, having finished: "That is all right; in a week they will be on their way to the guillotine."

Charlotte, finding in these words an addition of strength, and a reason for striking, drew the knife from her bosom, and plunged it up to the handle in the heart of Marat. The blow, falling thus from a height, struck with an extraordinary accuracy, passing near the clavicle, through the lungs, opened the head of the carotids, and a stream of blood gushed out.

"Help! my dear friend!" was all that he could say, and expired.

CHAPTER XIX.

DEATH OF CHARLOTTE CORDAY. (19TH JULY, 1793.)

When the wife and the commissioner entered, Charlotte was found standing motionless near the window. The man, barring the doors so that she could not escape, struck at her head with a chair. But she remained immovable. The people from the neighborhood and persons passing by, hearing the cries, flocked in. A surgeon was called, but one only was found dead. In the mean time the guard had with difficulty restrained the people from tearing Charlotte to pieces; grasping her firmly, for she did not think of protecting herself. Unmoved, she looked around with a clouded cold eye. A hairdresser of the neighborhood, who had taken possession of the knife, was brandishing it with horrible yells, but she paid no attention to him. The only thing that seemed to astonish her, and which (she said herself) made her

suffer, were the cries of Catherine Marat. They gave her for the first time the painful idea, "that, after all, Marat was a man." It seemed as if she was saying to herself, "What! was he beloved?"

The commissioner of the police soon arrived. At a quarter of eight came the heads of the police, Louvet and Marino, and finally, the deputies, Maure, Chabot, Drouet, and Legendre, who had been sent by the Convention to see the *monster*. They were astonished to find, surrounded by soldiers, who were holding her hands, a beautiful young girl, perfectly calm, answering every question with firmness and simplicity, and without either timidity or pretension. She even confessed *that she would not have escaped if she could have done so.* Such are the contradictions of nature that, in an address to the French people, written some time before, and which she then had about her, she says *she wanted to perish* in order that her head, being carried through Paris, should serve as a signal for the friends of the law to rally. Another contradiction: she both said and wrote that she hoped *to die unknown.* Notwithstanding this, her certificate of baptism and passport which she had about her, would alone have caused her

to be recognized. The other things found upon her showed the perfect tranquillity of her mind; they were those which a careful woman, with habits of order, would have had. Besides her key, watch, and money, she had a thimble and some thread, so as to repair in prison the probable disorder which a violent arrest would cause to her dress.

The distance to the Abbaye, scarcely two minutes, was a dangerous one. The street was crowded with furious Cordeliers, friends of Marat, who, with cries and yells, demanded that the assassin should be given up to them. Charlotte had anticipated all kinds of death, except that of being torn to pieces. It is said that she turned pale for an instant at the thought of her danger. But at last they arrived at the Abbaye.

During the evening, being again interrogated by the members of the Committee of Safety, and by other deputies, she showed not only firmness, but cheerfulness. Legendre, puffed up with his importance, and innocently believing himself to be a martyr, said to her: "Was it not you who came to me yesterday under the disguise of a nun." "The citizen is mistaken," said she, with

a smile; "I do not esteem either his life or his death of importance to the good of the Republic." Chabot was holding his watch all the time. "I thought," said she, "that the Capuchins made a vow of poverty." To the great sorrow of Chabot and those who interrogated her, they were not able to find either about her or in her answers anything which could lead to the belief that she had been sent by the Girondists of Caen.

During the interrogatories of the evening, the impudent Chabot persisted that she had still a paper hidden in her bosom, and, cowardly profitting by her hands being bound, he placed his hand on her, and would without doubt have found what he sought, the manifesto of the Girondists. Bound as she was, she quickly repulsed him; throwing herself back with so much violence that the laces broke, and for an instant her chaste and heroic breast was exposed to view. All were touched. She was unbound in order to allow her to readjust her dress. She was also allowed to turn down her sleeves and to put on her gloves under her chains.

On the morning of the 16th she was transferred from the Abbaye to the Conciergerie. In the

evening she wrote a long letter to Barbaroux, which was eminently calculated to show by its cheerfulness (for sorrow is the accompaniment of sin) a perfect tranquillity of mind. This letter, which could not fail of being read, was spread over Paris the next day, and, in spite of its familiar form, was within the compass of a manifesto, and produced the impression that the volunteers of Caen were ardent and numerous. But she was ignorant of the defeat of Vernon. What would seem to indicate that she was less calm than she pretended to be was that four times she returned to the cause and excuse of her act: peace, and the desire for peace. The letter is dated, "the second day of the preparation for peace." About the middle of this paper she says: "Can peace be established as soon as I desire it? I have enjoyed peace for two days. My happiness is that of my country."

She wrote to her father, asking pardon for having disposed of her life, quoting to him this line:—

"Crime, but not the scaffold, causes shame."

She wrote also to a young deputy, Doulcet de Pontécoulant, nephew to the Abbess of Caen, a

prudent Girondist, who, Charlotte Corday said, was seated on the mountain. She chose him as her defender. Doulcet, not sleeping at home, did not receive the letter.

According to a valuable note, preserved by the family of the painter who had taken her likeness in prison, she had ordered a cap to be made expressly for her trial. This explains how she managed to expend thirty-six francs during so short a captivity.

But what would be the plan of the accusation? In a proclamation, the authorities of Paris attributed the crime *to the Federalists*, at the same time saying, "that this fury came out of the house of the ci-devant Count Dorset." Fouquier-Tinville wrote to the Committee of Safety "*that he had been informed* that she was a friend of Belzunce; that Barbaroux had forced her to the act in order to avenge Belzunce and his relation Biron, recently denounced by Marat"—a foolish story, which he did not even speak of in his declaration.

The public were not mistaken. Everybody knew that she was alone, that she had no other counsellors but her own courage, devotion, and

fanaticism. The prisoners of the Abbaye and the Conciergerie, even the people in the streets, if we except the outburst of the first moment, looked upon her in silence, but with respectful admiration. "When she appeared in the hall," said her official defender, Chauveau Lagarde, "judges, jury, spectators, and all, *appeared before her as before the judge of a supreme tribunal.*" "Her features have been painted," continued he, "and her words have been recorded, but no art has been able to picture that noble mind which breathes in all her features. The great effect of the trial was in things felt, but impossible to express." He afterwards corrected the answers, so skilfully disfigured, mutilated, and weakened in the Moniteur. Many must be struck by the resemblance of the replies to the concise dialogues of Corneille.

"Who inspired you with so much hatred?"

"I imbibed no hatred from others; I had enough within myself."

"Was this act suggested to you?"

"What one has not conceived one's self is badly executed."

"What did you dislike in him?"

"His crimes."

"What do you mean by that?"

"The injuries done to France."

"What did you hope for in killing him?"

"To give peace to my country."

"Do you think you have killed all the Marats?"

"This one dead, the others, perhaps, will tremble."

"Since when had you formed this design?"

"Since the 31st of May, when the representatives of the people were arrested here."

The president, after the evidence given against her: "What answer do you make to that?"

"Nothing, as long as I have succeeded."

Her veracity was only contradicted in one point. She declared that at the review at Caen there were thirty thousand men. She wished to make Paris tremble.

Several answers showed that this resolute heart was not an unnatural one. She could not hear to the end the evidence given, often interrupted by sobs by the wife of Marat. She hurriedly said, "Yes, it was I who killed him."

She also shuddered when the knife was shown

her, and turning away her head, pushed it back with her hand, saying, in a broken voice: "Yes, I recognize it—I recognize it."

Fouquier-Tinville drew attention to the fact that she had struck from above, in order that the blow should not fail by striking a rib, and added, "Apparently you have been accustoming your hand to this for some time?" "Oh, the wretch!" cried she; "he takes me for an assassin." This word, said Chauveau-Lagarde, was like a clap of thunder.

The trial was closed: it had lasted half an hour.

President Montané wanted to save her. He changed the question put to the jury, contenting himself with asking: "Did she do it with premeditation?" and suppressing the second part of the formula, "with criminal and contra-revolutionary designs?" This was brought against him at his arrest some days after.

The president, in order to save, and the jury, in order to humiliate her, wanted the advocate to represent her as crazy. He looked at her and read it in her eyes; he aided her as she wished to be, establishing the long premeditation; but,

notwithstanding the defence, she did not wish to be defended. Young, and carried away by the sight of this great courage, he ventured on this word (which so nearly brought him to the scaffold): "This calm sacrifice, *sublime* with reference to"——

After the condemnation she approached her young advocate, saying, with much grace, that she thanked him for this delicate and generous defence, and wished to give him some token of her esteem. "These gentlemen have just told me that my property has been confiscated; I owe something at the prison, and I leave it to you to discharge my debt."

On descending from the hall by the dark staircase and turning into the cells which are below, she smiled to her fellow-prisoners who were looking at her as she passed, and excused herself from the promise she had made to the porter Richard and his wife to breakfast with them. She received the visit of a priest who came to offer her his attendance, and, showing him out politely, she said: "Thank those persons for me who have sent you."

She observed that, during the trial, a painter

was endeavoring to catch her features. She instantly turned to him, and after the sentence gave to him the last moments which remained before the execution. The painter, M. Hauer, was second in command of a battalion of the Cordeliers. He owed perhaps to his rank the favor of being left with her, but one gendarme being present. She talked with him very tranquilly on indifferent subjects, on the events of the day, and on the moral peace which she felt within herself. She desired M. Hauer to make a smaller copy of the portrait and to send it to her family.

At the end of an hour and a half, a low knocking was heard at a little door behind her. It was opened, and the executioner entered. Charlotte, turning round, saw the scissors and the red chemise which he carried, and could not avoid evincing a slight emotion, exclaiming, involuntarily, "What! already?" She immediately recovered herself, and addressing M. Hauer: "I do not know, sir, how to thank you sufficiently for the trouble you have taken; I have nothing but this to offer you, keep it in memory of me." At the same time, taking the scissors, she cut a beautiful ringlet of pale yellow hair, which had escaped

from her cap, and handed it to M. Hauer. The gendarme and the executioner were much touched.

At the moment when, on mounting the cart, the crowd, animated by two contrary feelings, of anger and admiration, saw coming out of the lower arcade of the prison the beautiful and splendid victim in her red mantle, Nature seemed to connect itself with human passion, and a violent storm burst over Paris. It did not last long, seeming to fly before her, when she appeared at the Pont-Neuf; and as she advanced slowly along the Rue St. Honoré, the sun appeared high and strong in the heavens, for it was not yet seven o'clock in the evening (19th July). The reflection on her red dress heightened, in a strange and fantastic manner, the brilliant effect of her complexion and eyes.

It is said that Robespierre, Danton, and Camille Desmoulins stationed themselves on the road to look at her—a peaceful image. But what made this revolutionary Nemesis terrible was, that she disturbed all hearts, leaving them full of astonishment. Close observers, men of letters and physicians, were struck with one singular thing:

Even the firmest of the condemned sustained themselves by animation, either by singing patriotic songs or by formidable appeals which they threw out against their enemies; she showed a perfectly calm, grave, and innocent serenity amidst the cries of the mob. She arrived at the square with singular majesty, and seemed as if transfigured into the orb of the setting sun. A physician, who did not lose sight of her an instant, says that she turned pale at the sight of the axe; but her color immediately returned, and she mounted the scaffold with a firm step. The young girl reappeared in her at the moment when the executioner took off her neck-handkerchief; her modesty suffered; she advanced, as if anticipating death. The moment her head fell, a carpenter, a partisan of Marat, who assisted the executioner, seizing it by the hair and showing it to the people, had the cowardly ferocity to give it a blow. A shudder of horror and murmurs went round the square. It was thought that the head blushed. This was owing perhaps simply to an optical effect: the excited crowd had the rays of the setting sun, which penetrated the trees of the Champs Elysées, in their eyes. The commune

of Paris and the tribunal satisfied the public sentiment by putting the man in prison.

Amidst the cries of the infinitely small number of the Maratists, the general impression was of violent admiration and sorrow. We can judge of it by the boldness of the *Chronique de Paris*, during the great slavery of the press, in printing a eulogy, almost without restriction, on Charlotte Corday. Many men were deeply impressed, and have never recovered. We have seen the emotion of the president, who wanted to save her, the emotion of the young advocate, who, generally timid, at this time was beside himself. That of the painter was not less. He showed during the same year the portrait of Marat, perhaps as an excuse for painting that of Charlotte Corday. But his name does not appear again, not seeming to have painted since this fatal work.

The effect of this death was terrible: it was making people love death.

The example, of the calm intrepidity of a charming girl, had an attractive influence. More than one who saw her had a mournful desire to follow, and seek her in unknown worlds. A young German, Adam Lux, who had been sent

to Paris to ask the reunion of Mayence to France, published a pamphlet demanding death, in order to rejoin Charlotte Corday. This unfortunate man came here with his heart full of enthusiasm, thinking to see, face to face in the French Revolution, this pure ideal of human regeneration, and could not support the early dimness of this ideal; he could not understand the too cruel proofs which such a declaration would bring. In these melancholy thoughts, when liberty seemed lost to him, that he saw it in Charlotte Corday. He saw at the tribunal her touching and admirable intrepidity; and he saw her majestic as a queen on the scaffold. She appeared to him twice— Enough! he had drank of death.

"I believed in her courage," said he, "but I was astonished when I saw her sweetness amongst the barbarous shrieks, her penetrating look, and those sparkling and moist electric sparks glistening in her beautiful eyes, a tender as well as a bold soul spoke! Immortal remembrance! sweet and bitter emotions which I had never known! They sustain in one the love of a country for which she was willing to die, and of which, by

adoption, I am also the son. How sacred is their guillotine, for it is now an altar!"

Pure and holy soul, deep mystical heart, he adored Charlotte Corday, but he did not approve the murder.

"There is no doubt," he said, "that it is right to kill the usurper and tyrant; but such was not Marat."

Remarkable sweetness of soul, which strongly contrasts with the violence of a great people, who fell in love with the assassination. I speak of the Girondists, and even the royalists. Their fury was in want of a saint and legend. Charlotte's death was an entirely different remembrance, and another kind of poetry, from that of Louis XVI., a vulgar martyr, whose only interest was in his unhappiness.

A religion was founded on the death of Charlotte: the religion of the poniard.

André Chenier wrote a hymn to the new divinity:—

> O vertu! le poignard, seul espoir de la terre,
> Est ton arme sacrée!

This hymn, constantly renewed in every age

and country, has traversed to the end of Europe, in Puschkine's *Hymn to the Poniard.*

Brutus, the old patron of heroic murders, the dim remembrance of a far off antiquity, found himself changed henceforth into a new divinity, more powerful and fascinating. The young man who dreams after reading Alibaud or Sand, what are his visions now? What does he see? Is it the ghost of Brutus? No; the charming Charlotte, as she appeared in the sinister splendor of her red mantle, heightened by the purple setting of the July sun.

CHAPTER XX.

THE PALAIS ROYAL IN '93.—THE SALONS.—HOW THE GIRONDISTS WEAKENED THEMSELVES.

The too lively emotions, the violent changes, and great vicissitudes, had broken the moral fibre amongst many men; but it seems to have dulled the one feeling, which survives all others, that of life; it appears as if it would be very strong in those men who so blindly revel in pleasure; but it was often the contrary. Many, tired and disgusted, and not desiring life, adopted the pleasure of suicide. This has been observed, from the commencement of the Revolution. In proportion as a political party became weaker and approached destruction, the men which composed it thought of nothing but pleasure; it was seen in Mirabeau, Chapelin, Talleyrand, Clermont, Tonnere, and the Club of '89, which met at the first restaurateur of the Palais Royal,

near the gambling-room; the brilliant coterie was but a company of players. The centre also of the Legislature and Convention, so many men thrown in the course of fatality, went to console and forget themselves, in these houses of ruin. This Palais Royal, so lively and dazzling, with light, luxury, gold, and beautiful women, who come to you, praying you to be happy, to live, what is this, in reality, but the house of death? It was there, under its most rapid forms. On the first flight of steps, were the sellers of gold; in the galleries of wood, women. In the corners of the first were the venders of wine, and owners of little coffee-houses, who offered you means of ruining yourself at a cheap rate. Your pocket-book, filled with money, leaves a good part of its contents on the first flight, another part in the coffee-houses, then in play, on the first story, and the rest on the second. At last it is dry; all is evaporated. It was not like the first days of the Palais Royal, when these coffee-houses were the churches of the growing Revolution, when Camille, in the coffee-house of Foy, preached the crusade. It was no longer this age of Revolutionary innocence, when the good Fauchet, in the

Circus, professed the doctrine of *Friends*, and the philanthropic association of the *Circle of Truth*. The cafés and restaurateurs, were sad, but greatly frequented. Some of the famous shops were becoming funereal. Saint Fargeau was killed at the Restaurant Février; and near it, at the café Corraza, the destruction of the Girondists was plotted.

Life, death; rapid, gross, violent, and exterminating pleasure, behold the Palais Royal of '93!

They must have gambling, and many found their ruin at the first throw of the card.

They must have women; not this puny race which we see in the streets, useful only to confirm men in continence. The girls whom they bought were chosen, if we may say so, as the gigantic animals were in the Normand pasturages, flourishing with flesh and life, to show in the carnival. With their breasts, shoulders, and arms naked, in the depth of winter, and their heads set off with enormous bouquets of flowers, they governed all these crowds of men. Old men recall having seen at the Palais Royal, from the Reign of Terror to the Consulate, four very tall blonds, enormous creatures, true atlases of prostitution, who, more

than all the others, have borne the weight of revolutionary orgies. With what contempt they saw in the galleries of wood swarms of milliners, whose sprightly manners and lively glances were but little redeemed by their meagreness.

We have seen the visible side of the Palais Royal. But whoever has crossed the two valleys of Gomorrah, which go all round, and ascends the nine stories of the Radziwil, a true tower in Sodom, would have found an entirely different thing. There were many, who loved better these obscure dark holes, small gambling-houses, closets, alleys, with no thoroughfare, and cellars made as light as day, by lamps, well seasoned by the close smell of an old house; even Versailles, in the midst of all its pomps, took its odor from below stairs. When the old Duchess of D——, returning to the Tuileries, in 1814, was congratulated, on the good times having entirely returned, "Yes," said she, sadly, "but we do not find the smell of Versailles here."

Behold this dirty, infectious, and dark world, enjoying shameful pleasures, where crowds of men had taken refuge, some contra-revolutionists, and others, tried, disgusted, and shaken by events,

from that time having neither party, heart or idea. These were determined to create for themselves an alibi in play and women during these stormy times. They shut themselves up, determined not to think. The people were dying with hunger, and the army with cold; what was that to them? Enemies to the Revolution, which called them to the sacrifice, it appeared as if they were saying: "We are in thy dens; thou canst devour us one by one; me to-morrow, another to-day. That is all very well; but to make men of us, to open our hearts, and make us generous, and sensible to the numberless sufferings of the world, we defy you to do that."

And let us understand well that we are not yet clear of them. If we raise ourselves above them, it is by insensible transitions. From the houses of girls to the houses of play, then innumerable, there was little difference, gambling being generally conducted by equivocal ladies. The *salons* of actresses follow, and, on the same level, side by side, those of intriguing politicians, and literary women. A sad ladder where the elevation does not bring amelioration. The lowest was perhaps the least dangerous. Women are the

stupefying roads to death. Ladies are often the cause of another kind of death, and a worse one, that of creeds and principles, the enervation of opinions, a fatal art in softening and weakening characters.

How often new men are represented on the soil of Paris, thrown into a world where everything was joined to weaken, and cause a decay of their powers, to deprive them of their civic nerve, enthusiasm, and austerity. Under this influence the greater part of the Girondists lost, not only the ardor for the combat, not only the courage, and strength to die, but above all, that of conquering, the fixed and strong resolution to carry all before them, at every cost. They became weakened, and possessed no longer "that sharpness of the blood which gains battles." Pleasure aiding philosophy, they resigned themselves. As soon as a politician yields he is lost.

The greater part of these men were very young, and until now buried in the obscurity of the provinces, saw themselves suddenly transported into a blaze of light, into luxurious pleasures entirely new for them, surrounded with the flattering words, and caresses of the fashionable world. Flattery and caresses are often more powerful

than sincere; their energy was admired, and they wanted to make them useful! Women, especially, and even the best, in such a case, exert a dangerous influence, to which there is no resistance. They influence by their graces, but still more often by the touching interest they inspire, by their frights which they wish calmed, and from the happiness they really feel at receiving support from you. Those who arrived well guarded, armed to the teeth, and closed against all seductions, from such, beauty could gain nothing. But what could be done against a frightened woman, who says, taking you by the hands, and leaning upon you: "Ah! monsieur! Ah! my friend, you can still save us—speak for us, I pray you; take such and such a step for me, pronounce such a discourse. You would do it for no one else, I know, but you will do it for me. See how my heart beats!"

These ladies were very skilful, being careful at first not to show the after-thought. The first day, good, moderate, and mild republicans would be seen in their *salons*. The second day, Feuillants and Fayettists would be presented to you; for some time no more would be shown you. At

last, sure of their power, having conquered your feeble heart, and accustomed the eyes and ears to these shades of a society so little republican, the true face is unmasked, the old royalist friends are discovered for whom they have been working. Fortunate, if the poor young man, arrived so pure minded at Paris, did not find himself, without his knowledge, mingling amongst the gentlemen spies and intriguers of Coblentz.

The Girondists thus fell almost entirely into the snares of Parisian society. They were not asked to become royalists; they made themselves Girondists. This party became, little by little, the asylum of royalism, the protecting mask under which the contra-revolution could maintain itself at Paris, even in the face of the Revolution.

The moneyed men, bankers, were divided: some being Girondists, and some Jacobins. However, the change from their first too well known opinions, to republican tenets, seemed to them more easy on the side of the Girondists. The *salons* of artists especially, and even those of fashionable women, were neutral ground, where business men met, as if by chance, political men, talked

with, conferred with them, and without other presentation, ended by uniting with them.

But the purest relation, and that most distant from intrigue, was true love, which did not the less contribute to break the nerve of the Girondists. The love of Mademoiselle Candeille was conducive to the destruction of Vergniaud. This preoccupation of the heart increased his indecision, and natural indolence. It was said that his mind seemed to be wandering elsewhere, and they were right. This mind, at a time when the country should have claimed it entirely, was inhabiting another soul. A weak but charming woman's heart held, as if under lock and key, Vergniaud's lion heart. The voice and harp of the beautiful, good, and adorable Mademoiselle Candeille had fascinated him.

Though poor, he was loved and preferred by her whom the crowd followed. Vanity had no place there, neither the success of the orator, nor that of the young muse, whose piece obtained five hundred representations.

This beautiful and fascinating woman, full of moral grace, touching by her talent, and domestic virtues, and her tender, filial piety, had sought

out, and loved this lazy genius, who was sleeping at the top of the ladder; she whom all the crowd followed, left all to mount to him. Vergniaud allowed himself to be loved; he had surrounded his life with this love, and he continued to dream in it. Too clear-sighted not to see that both were on the borders of an abyss, into which they would fall. Another sorrow: he could not protect this accomplished woman who had given herself to him. She belonged, alas! to the public; her duty, and the necessity of supporting her parents, had led her to the theatre, and exposed her to the whims of so stormy a world. She who wanted to please but one, was obliged to please all, and to divide amongst this hardened and immoral crowd, greedy after new feelings, this treasure of her beauty, to which but one had a right. A humiliating and unhappy thought! and terrible enough, also, to make one tremble before the factions, when the immolation of woman would be, perhaps at any instant, a cruel play, a barbarous amusement for parties.

This was the vulnerable point of the great orator; here, was his one fear. There was neither cuirass nor cover here, nothing to defend his heart.

The times loved danger. It was just in the midst of the trial of Louis XVI., under the murderous looks of the parties who were marking each other out for death, that they discovered to the public the place where they could strike. Vergniaud received the greatest triumph, that of humanity, Mademoiselle Candeille herself, descending to the theatre, played her own piece, the *Beautiful Farmer's Wife.* This carried the raving public a hundred, a thousand leagues away from all these events, in a mild and peaceful world, where they forgot everything, even the danger of their country.

The experiment succeeded. The *Beautiful Farmer's Wife* had an immense success; the Jacobins themselves spared this charming woman, who threw over all the opium of love, and the waters of Lethe. The impression was not less favorable among the Girondists. The piece of Vergniaud's friend plainly revealed that her party was that of humanity and nature, still more than that of country, which would shelter the vanquished, though this party did not possess that inflexible austerity which the times seemed to demand.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE FIRST WIFE OF DANTON. (1792–1793.)

THE collection of Colonel Maurin, which has unhappily been sold and dispersed, contained, among other precious things, a very beautiful bust of the first wife of Danton, taken, I believe, after death. The character of it was goodness, calmness, and strength. We are no longer astonished that she exercised so much dominion over the heart of her husband, and left so many fond remembrances.

How could it have been otherwise? She was the wife of his youth, poverty, and obscure commencement. Danton, then lawyer to the Council, with no suits, and possessing nothing but debts, was supported by his father-in-law, a vender of lemonade at the corner of the Pont Neuf, who, it is said, gave them some louis every month; he lived royally in the streets of Paris,

without care or anxiety, gaining little, and desiring nothing. When food was absolutely wanting, they went for some time to the woods, at Fonteney, near Vincennes, where the father-in-law had a small house.

Danton's nature was rich in elements of vice, but he had very few costly ones; being neither a gambler nor a drunkard. It is true, that he loved women, and his own wife especially. Women were the sensible means by which the parties attached him, and sought to gain some control over him. Thus, the Orleans party tried to bewitch him by means of the mistress of the prince, the beautiful Madame de Buffon. Danton, by imagination, and the demands of his stormy temperament, was easily moulded. However, his need of real love and attachment invariably brought him each evening to the conjugal bed, and to the good and dear wife of his youth, at the obscure fireside of the elder Danton. The unhappiness of the poor wife was great at being suddenly carried, in '92, to the Minister of Justice, at the terrible moment of the invasion and massacre of Paris. She fell sick, to the great sorrow of her husband. We do not doubt that this was

the chief cause of Danton, in November or December, taking a last, humiliating and sorrowful step, in order to draw nearer to the Girondists, and to stop, if it were possible, on the borders of the abyss which would swallow him up.

The overwhelming rapidity of event upon event, caused by such a revolution, had broken the heart of Madame Danton. The terrible reputation of her husband, and his frightful boast of having made September, had killed her. She entered trembling the fatal abode of the Minister of Justice, and she came out of it dead, I should say death-stricken. It was a shadow which reentered the sad house, that formed an arcade and vault between the passage and the street (also sad) of the Cordeliers; it is now the street of the Ecole-de-Médecine.

The blow was a heavy one to Danton. He had arrived at the fatal point when, the man having accomplished by the concentration of his powers the chief work of his life, his unity diminishes, and his duality reappears. The control of the will being less under command, is renerved with strength, nature, and heart, all that is perfect with man. Thus arrives, in the ordinary course of

things, two distinct ages, divided by time. But then, we have said, that there was no more time; the Revolution had killed it among many other things.

The moment had arrived for Danton. His work, the public safety in '92, finished, he had, against his wishes in a relaxed moment, an insurrection of nature, which took possession of his heart, worked upon it, until pride and anger took him in their turn and roughly led him almost to death.

Men who scatter lives with such terrible abundance, who nourish the people with their words, their fiery speeches, and their heart's blood, have great need of the fireside. They want somewheres to recover and calm their beating hearts. And this can never be done but by a woman, and a good one as Madame Danton was. Judging by the portrait and bust, she was firm and calm, as well as sweet and beautiful; the tradition of Arcis, where she often went, adds that she was pious, naturally melancholy, and of a timid disposition.

She had the merit, in her calm and easy situation, of being willing to run the hazard, of recog-

nizing and following this young man, an unknown genius, without reputation, or fortune. Virtuous, she had chosen him in spite of his vices, plainly shown in his dark and troubled countenance. She had joined herself to this obscure and wandering destiny, and which may be said to have been built on the storm. A sensible, but affectionate woman, she had seized this angel of darkness and light on its flight, and crossed the abyss, passing with it the highest bridge. Then, she had no more strength, and glided into the hand of God.

"A wife is a fortune," as the Orientals say. It was not only a wife which was leaving Danton, it was fortune and a kind destiny; it was youth and kindness, this gift with which fate endows man, when, as yet, he has done nothing to merit it. It was confidence and faith, the first act of belief performed by him. The wife of the Arabian prophet asked him why he had always mourned his first wife! "Because," said he, "she believed in me when no one else did."

I have no doubt that it was Madame Danton who made him promise, that if the king must be overthrown, to save his life, or at least that of the

queen, the pious Madame Elizabeth, and the two children. He had two children; one born (we see by the dates) in the sacred time which followed the taking of the Bastille; the other, in the year '91, the time when, Mirabeau being dead and the Constituent Assembly extinct, they delivered their future into the hands of Danton, when the new Assembly collected, and he became the new king of speech. This mother, after the birth of her two children, fell sick, and was nursed by Danton's mother. Each time that he entered, ruffled and wounded by things without, when he left at the door the armor of a politician and the steel mask, he found another wound, a terrible and bloody one, the certainty that very soon he would be torn to pieces himself, cut in two, and his heart guillotined. He had always loved this excellent woman; but his changeableness and passion, had sometimes led him from her. And when she is gone, see how the strength and depth of his love for her were felt. And he could do nothing. She sank, fled, and escaped from him, in proportion as his contracted arms held her more tightly. But the hardest of all to bear, was that he was not even allowed to see

her die and receive her last adieu. He could not remain; but was obliged to leave this death-bed. His contradictory situation was showing itself; it was impossible to connect the two Dantons. France and the world were watching him closely in this fatal trial. He could not speak, and he could not keep silence. If he could not find some means of rallying the right side, and, through them, the centre and mass of the Convention, he must fly from Paris, and go to Belgium, and not return until the course of events and destiny should have loosened or tightened the knot. But then, this sick wife, would she still live? would her love inspire her with sufficient strength to exist until then, in spite of nature, and keep her last sigh for the return of her husband? Every one foresaw what would happen, that he would be too late, and only return to find the house desolate, the children motherless, and this body, so passionately beloved, in the depths of the tomb. Danton thought but little of the soul, it was the body which he sought and wanted to see, which he forced from the earth, frightful and disfigured, at the end of seven days and seven nights, to dispute in frantic embraces with the worms.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE SECOND WIFE OF DANTON.—LOVE IN '93.

THE fall of the Girondists was followed by great depression. The conquerors were almost as much troubled as the conquered. Marat was sick, Vergniaud did not condescend to fly. Danton sought in a second marriage a kind of *alibi* from political affairs.

Love had much to do with the death of both Vergniaud and Danton.

The great Girondist orator, a prisoner in the street of Clichy, in a quarter which was almost deserted, and nearly all gardens, less the prisoner of the Convention than of Mademoiselle Candeille, was moving between love and doubt. Would the love of this brilliant woman remain to him, in the total ruin? What he felt within himself was shown in the bitter letters, which he threw out against the Mountain. Fatality had caused

him to dispense with all exertion, and he was scarcely sorry, finding it sweet to die thus, feeling the beautiful tears which a woman lets fall so easily, and willing to believe that he was loved. Danton, about that time, was meditating for himself the same suicide.

Unhappily, this was then the case with a great many men. At the time when public business became a private one, also a question of life and death, they said: "To-morrow, business." They shut themselves up at home, took refuge at their fireside, in love and nature. Nature was a good mother, she came to them, and clasped them to her bosom.

Danton was married in mourning. His first wife, so much loved, had died the 10th February; and he had her exhumed the 17th, in order to see her again. Four months after the 17th, day by day, distracted and frantic with sorrow, he had re-opened the earth to embrace in the horror of death-clothes she who had been his youth, happiness, and fortune. What did he see, when clasping her in his arms (at the end of seven days)? Truly, she had carried him with her.

Whilst dying, she had arranged, and wished

his second marriage, which contributed so much to his destruction. Having a tender affection for him, she thought that he loved, and desired to render him happy. She also left two little children, and wanted to give them a mother in a young girl, who, though not yet sixteen, was full of moral charm, pious as Madame Danton, and of a royalist family. The poor wife, who was dying from the emotions caused by the disturbances of September, and the terrible reputation of her husband, without doubt thought that his marrying again would draw him from the Revolution, prepare his conversion, make him perhaps the secret defender of the queen, the boy in the Temple, and all the persecuted ones.

Danton, in the Parliament, had known the father of the young girl; he was the crier. When named minister, he obtained a good situation for him in the navy. But, as much obliged as the family were to Danton, they did not seem favorable to the marriage. The mother, not in the least influenced by the terror of his name, dryly reproached him with September, which he had not caused, and the death of the king, whom he would have been willing to save. Danton was

very careful not to plead. He did what one would do if they were in love and hurried in order to gain their suit—he repented. He confessed what was true, that the excess of anarchy was each day becoming more difficult to support, and that already he was tired with the Revolution, etc.

If he was repugnant to the mother, he was not less so to the daughter, Mademoiselle Louise Gely, a delicate and pretty creature, brought up in this *bourgeois* family of the old stamp, an honest middling class, and devoted to the old *régime*. When near Danton she felt more astonishment and fear, than love. This strange person, both a lion and a man, remained a mystery to her. He had filed his teeth, and cut off his claws, but she did not feel any more safety before this sublime monster.

The monster was, nevertheless, a good man, but all the grandeur he possessed turned against him. This mysterious savage energy, this poetic ugliness radiating with light, this immense masculine strength, from which was springing a flood of ideas and immortal words, frightened, and, perhaps closed the child's heart.

The family thought to stop him short, in presenting to him the obstacle which they thought would be insurmountable, the necessity of submitting to Catholic ceremonies. Everybody knew that Danton, the true son of Diderot, saw nothing but superstition in Christianity, and adored but Nature.

The son and slave of nature obeyed this requirement without difficulty. Whatever altar or idol was presented to him, he would hasten to it, and swear there—such was the tyranny of his blind desire; and his nature was an accomplice to it; she suddenly unfolded all his hidden energies—a late spring, bursting out into a burning summer; it was an eruption of roses—there never was such a contrast between so triumphant a season and so troublesome a situation. The weight of an ardent, exacting, and passionate temperament was weighing upon a moral depression. Under this impulse, Danton did not express great repugnance, when it was told him that a refractory priest had been chosen to pronounce the benediction. He would go through with all. And lastly, this conscientious and fanatic priest, in his cell, did not intend to let Danton off with the

license; he must kneel down, and pretend only to confess; thus, in one act, profaning two religions: the present and the past.

Where, then, was this altar consecrated by our assemblies to the religion of the law, on the ruins of the old altar of free-will and grace? Where was the altar of the Revolution, where the good Camille, the friend of Danton, brought his newborn child, setting the first example to the generations to come. Those who know the portraits of Danton, especially the sketches taken by David, on the nights of the Convention, cannot be ignorant how the man could descend from the lion to the bull. What do I say? to the wild boar! a dark, abasing, and sorrowful type of savage sensuality.

A new and all-powerful influence was commencing to reign in the sanguinary period which we are relating; an enervating and terrible influence, which dissolved and broke in two the nerve of the Revolution. Under the apparent austerity of republican manners, amongst the tragedies and terrors of the scaffold, women and physical love were the kings of '93.

The condemned were seen going in the cart

listlessly holding a rose in their mouth. This was the true image of the times. These bloody roses led men to death.

Danton himself led, indeed dragged, in the same manner, confessed it with a cynical and unhappy *naiveté*, of which the expression must be modified. They accused him of conspiring. "Me! it is impossible! What do you think a man could do who is intent upon love every night?"

In the melancholy songs, which are still repeated, Fabré d'Eglantine and others have left us the Marsellaise, of death doomed voluptuaries, hymns, songs to be chanted in the prisons, even at the tribunal, even to the foot of the scaffold. However love may appear in '93, it was the brother of death.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE GODDESS OF REASON. (10TH NOVEMBER, '93.)

In 1816, I knew Mademoiselle Dorothée ——, who, I do not remember in what town, represented Reason, in the *fêtes* of '93. She was a grave woman, and had always led an exemplary life. She had been chosen for her great height and good reputation. She had never been beautiful, indeed, she squinted.

The founders of the new worship, who did not think of disgracing it, expressly recommended in their papers, that those who, in other towns, were going to have the feast, *to select in filling so august a part persons whose characters would make their beauty respected, whose severity of manners and looks should repulse license, and fill hearts with pure and kind feelings.* Young ladies of esteemed families were generally, *bon gré mal gré*, chosen to represent Reason.

At Saint Sulpice, it was represented by the

wife of one of the first magistrates of Paris, at Notre Dame, by a celebrated, beloved, and esteemed artist, Mademoiselle Maillard. We know how these last were forced (even by their art), to lead a laborious and quiet life. This divine gift was sold to them at the price of great abstinence from many pleasures. The day when the world, being wiser, tendered priesthood to woman, as had been in antiquity, were they astonished to see at the head of the national pageants the good, charitable, and holy Garcia Viardot?

Three days before the fête, some desired that the symbol which should represent Reason might be a statue. The objection was that a fixed image might recall the memory of the Virgin, *and create another idolatry.* A movable, living, and animated image, was preferred, which, changing at each fête, would not become an object of superstition.

It was at the time when Chaumette, the celebrated attorney of the Commune, placing himself in opposition to his colleague, Herbert, had asked that the fantastical tyranny of the lesser revolutionary clubs should be examined and limited by the inspection of the general council. On the 10th November, under the banner of mode-

ration and indulgent justice, the new religion was inaugurated. Gossec composed the songs, and Chenier the words. In two days, they had constructed, in the very narrow choir of Notre Dame, a temple of philosophy, ornamented with effigies of the wise, and fathers of the Revolution. A mountain supported this temple; and the torch of truth burnt on a rock. The magistrates were seated under the columns. No arms, and no soldiers. Two rows of young girls, yet children, were all the adornments of the fête; they wore white dresses, and were crowned with oak, but not, as has been said, roses.

Reason, dressed in white, with a blue mantle, came out of the temple of philosophy, and placed herself on a seat of pure verdure. The young girls sung the hymn to her; she crossed at the foot of the mountain, throwing a mild look, and sweet smile on those who supported her. She enters, and the singing continues. They wait; that was all.

A chaste, sad, dry, and tiresome ceremony.*

* It is necessary to say that this worship was not the true one of the Revolution. It was already old and wearying, too old to play childishly. The cold attempt of '93 did not pro-

From Notre Dame, Reason went to the Convention. She entered with her innocent cortége of young girls, in white. Chaumette, who conducted Reason and Humanity, harmonized entirely with the feelings of the Assembly, by the courageous lead, in regard to justice, which he took the evening before.

A very frank fraternity burst out between the commune, convention, and people. The President made Reason sit by him, and gave her, in the name of the Assembly, the fraternal embrace,

ceed from her ardent breast, but from the reasoning schools of the time of the Encyclopædia. No; this negative face, abstract from God, however high and noble it was, was not that which hearts and the necessity of the time demanded. A higher God than that of geometry was wanted to sustain heroes and martyrs. The powerful God of nature, the God, Father, and Creator (unknown from the Middle Ages; *see* the Monuments of Diderot), himself was not sufficient; it was not enough from the revelations of Newton and Lavoisier. This God, which the soul needed, was the God of heroic justice, by which France, an armed priest in Europe, should call the buried people from the tomb.

Though not yet named or adored in our temples, this God was not the less followed by our fathers in their crusade for the liberties of the world. To-day, what would we be without him? On the heaped-up ruins, on the broken and extinguished firesides, when the soil sinks beneath our feet, our heart and hope is immovably fixed on it.

and all, united in a moment, by her benign air, hoped for better days.

The pale sun of afternoon (very rare in Brumaire), penetrating into the dark hall, dispersed some of the shadows. The Dantonists demanded that the Assembly should hold to their promise, of going to Notre Dame, to return the visit of Reason. They all rose simultaneously.

The weather was delighful, light, dry, and clear, like the most beautiful winter's day. The Convention took up their line of march, happy at this flash of unity which had appeared at a time of so much division. Many joined with all their hearts in this *fête*, firmly believing that in it they saw the true end of all their troubles. Their thought is plainly declared in an ingenious manner, in a speech of Clootz: "The discordant federalism of sects, vanished in the *unity* and *indivisibility* of reason."

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE WORSHIP OF WOMEN FOR ROBESPIERRE.

It is an astonishing thing that a man like Robespierre, of an austere appearance, voluntarily poor, of a careful, exact, but uniform and mediocral dress, and with an affected simplicity, should be so much loved and sought after by women.

There is but one answer, and it is the secret of the worship of which he was the object: *he inspired confidence.* Women do not hate a severe and grave appearance. So often victims of the levity of men, they willingly approach those who reassure them. They instinctively think that an austere man, in general, is the one who will keep his heart better for a loved person. For them, the heart is everything. The world is wrong in thinking they want to be amused. The sentimental rhetoric of Robespierre stood a good

chance of being sometimes very tiresome; he had only to say: "The charms of virtue, the sweet lessons of maternal love, a holy and sweet intimacy, the sensibility of my heart," and other like phrases, and the women were touched. Add that amongst these generalities he always had an individual part, still more sentimental, generally on himself, on the works of his sorrowful career, and his personal sufferings; all this was in each discourse, and so regularly was it introduced that the handkerchiefs were holden in readiness for these passages. Then, the emotion commenced, the well known part had arrived, with such or such variety, on the dangers which he run from the hatred of his enemies, the tears which one day would water the ashes of the martyrs of liberty. But, arrived there, it was too much, the heart burst forth, they could contain themselves no longer, but broke out in sobs.

Robespierre's pale and sad appearance aided him much in all this, pleading for him in advance with feeling hearts. With his torch of *Emile* and the *Contrat-social*, at the tribune he had the air of a sad bastard of Rousseau. His sparkling and quick eyes wandered without cessation

all over the hall, plunging into badly lighted corners, and often raised to the tribune of women. Joined to this, he managed, with gravity and dexterity, two pair of spectacles, one to see near objects or to read, and the other to distinguish far off, or to seek some person. Each one said: "It is I."

The excited partiality of the women especially burst out when, towards the end of 1792, in his struggle against the Girondists, he declared to the Jacobins, that if the intriguers disappeared, he himself would quit public life, and fly from the tribune, desiring nothing "but to pass his days in the delights of a tranquil and holy intimacy." A number of women's voices proceeded from the tribune: "We will follow you! We will follow you!"

There was one thing respectable in this fondness, separating it from the absurdities of the person and the time. Women followed with their hearts one whose behavior was the most worthy, whose probity was the best established, whose ideality was the highest, the one who, with as much capability as courage, constituting himself the defender of religious opinions at this time, dared, in December, 1792, to thank Providence for the safety of the country.

CHAPTER XXV.

ROBESPIERRE AT MADAME DUPLAY'S (1791-94).

THE little, mediocral, and faded portrait of Robespierre, at seventeen years old, represents him with a rose in his hand, perhaps to indicate that he was already a member of the academy of the *Rosates* at Arras. He holds this rose on his heart. Below is read this touching line: "*All for my friend.*"—(*The Saint-Abin Collection.*)

Would a young man, transported to Paris, remain always faithful to this sentimental purity? We do not know, but perhaps at the Constituent Assembly, the intimate friendship of the Lameths and other young nobles of the left, made him commit some fault. Perhaps during the first months of this Assembly, thinking that he had need of them, and desiring to bind this tie by a calculated attraction, had not made him a stranger

to the corruption of the times.* If it was so, he would only have followed his master, Rousseau, the Rousseau of the *Confessions*. But in a fortunate hour he awoke, and no person more happily ordered his life by continued purifying. *Emile*, *Vicaire Savoyard*, and the *Contrat-social*, set him free, and ennobled him: he became, indeed, Robespierre. With regard to morals he had not fallen. We have seen him, the evening of the massacre of the Champ de Mars (17th July, 1791),

* It was in 1790, apparently, that he was as the Heloise; he had a mistress. As to his conduct in 1789, I hesitate in relating a suspicious anecdote. I received it from a reliable source, an illustrious artist, a great admirer of Robespierre, who had received it from M. Alexandre de Lameth. One day the artist was walking with the old member of the Constituent Assembly, who, pointing out the old hotel of the Lameths, in the street Fleures, said that one evening, Robespierre, having dined with them, prepared to return home to the street Saintogne au Marias; and finding that he had forgotten his purse, borrowed a crown of six francs, because, that on his return, he wanted to stop at a house of ill-repute, saying, "That is better than to seduce the wife of one's friend." Lameth had not invented this speech—the most probable explanation appears to me, that Robespierre, recently entering Paris, and desiring to be adopted by the most advanced party, which, during the Constituent Assembly, was the young nobles, thought it useful to imitate their manners, at least in words. We can bet that he went to his pure Marais without committing any fault.

take shelter in a cabinet-maker's; a happy chance willed it thus; and it was but by chance that he returned, and established himself there.

Upon his return from his triumph at Arras, after the Constituent Assembly, in October, '91, he lodged with his sister in an apartment of the noble and aristocratic street Saint-Florentin, chiefly inhabited by emigrant nobles. Charlotte de Robespierre, of a rude and hard character, had, from her earliest childhood, all the bitterness of an old maid; her movements and tastes were those of the aristocracy of the provinces. She very much inclined to be the great lady. Robespierre, pure, delicate, and feminine, was not the less like his sister, in the coldness of his manners, and in his reserved, but careful bearing, a certain air of parliamentary aristocracy might be perceived. His conversation was always noble, even when speaking familiarly; his literary predilections were for noble, or well-known authors, such as Racine or Rousseau.

He was not a member of the Legislature. He had refused the place of public accuser, he said, because, having violently declaimed against those who were prosecuted, they would have chal-

lenged him as a personal enemy. It was also supposed that it would have caused him much pain to overcome his repugnance for the penalty of death. In Arras, it had decided him to leave his office as judge of the church. In the Constituent Assembly, he had declared himself against the punishment of death, against martial law, and all violent measures for public safety, which were very repugnant to him. In this year, from September '91 to September '92, Robespierre, separated from public duties, without any office or occupation but that of editor and member of the Jacobins, was less on the theatre of action. The Girondists were there; and showed their perfect accordance with the national feeling on the question of the war. Robespierre and the Jacobins adopted the peace question, an essentially unpopular one, and which did them great injury. There is no doubt that at this epoch the popularity of the great democracy had an essential need of fortifying and rejuvenating itself. It had talked a long time, incessantly, for the last three years, and had occupied, and fatigued the attention; at the end, it had had its triumph and reward. There was fear that the public, this king,

and as whimsical as one, very easy to tire, had thought itself not sufficiently paid, and had turned its attention to some other favorite.

Robespierre's speeches could not change, he had but one style; his accompaniments could do so. He needed a machine. Robespierre did not seek it; in some sort, it came to him. He accepted, seized, and looked upon it, without doubt, as a happy and providential thing to lodge with a cabinet-maker. The accompaniments are of much importance in Revolutionary life. Marat had instinctively felt it. He could very easily have remained in this first asylum, the garret of the butcher Legendre; he preferred the darkness of the cellar of the Cordeliers; this subterranean retreat, which resounding every moment with his brilliant words, like a concealed volcano, charmed his imagination; and it seized that of the people. Marat, the great imitator, knew perfectly well that, in 1788, the Belgian Marat, the Jesuit Feller, had drawn the greater part of his popularity from having chosen a domicile one hundred feet below the earth, at the bottom of a coal-pit.

Robespierre had not imitated either Feller or Marat, but he willingly seized an occasion of imi-

tating Rousseau, to realize in practice the book which he constantly imitated in words, to copy *Emile* as nearly as he could. He was lying sick, in his house, in the street Saint-Florentin, towards the end of '91, sick of his fatigue, and of inaction, new for him, sick of his sister, when Madame Duplay came and overwhelmed Charlotte with a frightful scene for not having let her know the sickness of her brother. She did not leave without making Robespierre arise, which he did with very good will. She established him at her house, in spite of the narrowness of the lodging, in a very clean garret, where she placed the best furniture of the house, a pretty blue and white bed, and some chairs. Pine-shelves, entirely new, were placed around, to hold the few books of the orator; his speeches, reports, and memoirs, etc., which were very numerous, filled up the rest. Except Rousseau and Racine, Robespierre only read Robespierre. On the walls, the zealous hand of Madame Duplay had hung everywhere the images and portraits which had been taken of her god; whichever side he turned, he could not help seeing himself; on the

right and left, Robespierre, Robespierre still, and Robespierre always.

The most skilful politician, who had laid out his plans, could not have succeeded so well as chance did for him. If it was not a cellar, as the abode of Marat, the little black and dark court was worth as much as one. The lower part of the house, whose green glasses testified to the dampness, with the little garden, without any air, which it possessed beyond, was as if smothered between the giant houses of the street St. Honoré, at this time, a quarter divided between bankers and aristocracy. Farther down, were the princely hôtels of the faubourg and splendid street Royale, with the odious remembrance of the fifteen hundred suffocated at the marriage of Louis XVI. Above, were the hôtels of the fermiers généraux of the place Vendome, built from the misery of the people.

What were the impressions of the visitors, devotees, and pilgrims, to Robespierre, in this impious quarter, where everything around wounded their eyes, as they came to contemplate the Just? The house preached, and spoke for itself. From the very threshold, the desolate and sad appear-

ance of the court, the wash-house, the step, and the floor, spoke the word of the people: "All here is *incorruptible*." If they ascended, the garret made them express still more astonishment; clean and poor, plainly showing much work, without any other ornament than the papers of the great man on the pine shelves, it plainly showed his perfect morality, his indefatigable works, and a life given to the people. There was none of the theatrical phantasmagoria of the maniac Marat, struggling in his cellar, variable, both in speech and appearance. Here were no whims, all was in its right place, everything was sober and serious. Pity came; and it might be thought, that, for the first time in this world, the house of virtue could be seen.

Remark, however, that this house was not the abode of an artisan. The first article of furniture which was seen in the little parlor showed it plainly enough. It was a harpsichord, a very rare instrument in those days, amongst the bourgeois. This instrument could show the kind of education the Mesdemoiselles Duplay received, each in her turn, at the neighboring convent, at least for some months. M. Duplay was not ex-

actly a cabinet-maker; being a contractor for the building of houses. The house was small, but it belonged to him.

All this wore two aspects; on one side were the people, and on the other side not the people; if we wish it, they were industrious, laborious persons, recently passed by their efforts and industry, to the state of little bourgeois. The change was visible. The father, a good, excitable, but rough man, and the mother, with a strong, violent will, both full of energy and cordiality, were in truth members of the people. The youngest of the four daughters was poetical, and full of spirits; the others were totally different, the eldest especially, whom the patriots called with a respectful gallantry Mademoiselle Cornélie. The latter was decidedly a young lady; she also felt Racine, when Robespierre sometimes read him to the family. In everything, from the harpsichord to the housekeeping, she maintained a proud, reserved grace; when she was helping her mother in the shed, washing, or preparing the meals of the family, it was always Cornélie.

Robespierre passed a year there, far from the tribune, writing and editing every day, preparing

articles and speeches which in the evening were recited to the Jacobins; one year, in reality, the only one, which he had lived in this world. Madame Duplay found it very agreeable to keep him there, surrounded with an anxious guard. We can judge of the ardor she showed when the committee of the 10th August sought a safe place at her house: "Go away; you will compromise Robespierre."

He was the child, the god of the house. All were devoted to him. The son served him as secretary, in copying and recopying his so often corrected discourses. The father Duplay and nephew, listened to him earnestly, devouring all his words. The daughters looked upon him as a brother; the youngest, lively and charming, lost no occasion to jest with the pale orator. With such hospitality, no house could be sad. The little court, enlivened by the family and workmen, did not want animation. Robespierre, from his garret, writing at his pine table, whenever he raised his eyes, saw Cornélie, or one or the other of her amiable sisters, coming and going from the house to the shed, and from the shed to the house. How much he could be strengthened in his demo-

cratic thoughts, by so sweet an image of the life of the people!

The people, without vulgarity and vice, these companions of misery! This life, at the same time popular and noble, in which domestic cares heighten the moral distinction of those who devote themselves to them! When beauty takes a part in the humble details of housekeeping, who has not felt the excellence of the repast prepared by the loved hand! And we do not doubt, that after the dry, dark, and artificial life, which Robespierre had led from his birth, he enjoyed this, and felt this genial ray of the charm of nature.

We can well understand that to harm such a family was difficult. A Jacobin one day reproached Robespierre, telling him "to make the most of the house of Duplay, to nourish himself by them, as Orgon nourished Tartuffe;" a low and vulgar reproach from a man unworthy of feeling the fraternity of the time, and the happiness of friendship. One thing is certain, that Robespierre only entered Madame Duplay's house on condition of paying board. His feeling of delicacy demanded it. They did not contradict him, but

let him talk. Perhaps to satisfy him, they received it the first months. But, in the terrible impulses of his short destiny, and in the grief of each day, he lost sight of it, besides believing, without doubt, of compensating his friends in some other way. In reality he had but his salary as a deputy, which he sometimes even forgot to receive. The pension paid to his sister, with occasional expenses of linen and clothes, and some sous given during his walks to the little Savoyards, left him literally nothing. The ten thousand francs which were found on him the 9th Thermidor were but a fable of his enemies. He then owed Madame Duplay four thousand francs for board.

CHAPTER XXVI.

LUCILE DESMOULINS (APRIL, 1794).

THE Constituent Assembly had ordered that each commune should have an altar in the town hall, where marriages could be celebrated, and births and deaths registered. The three most important periods of human destiny thus found themselves consecrated at the altar of the commune, and the religion of the family was united to that of the country; this altar soon became the only one, and the municipality the temple. The counsel of Mirabeau had been followed: "You will have done nothing, if you do not *de*-Christianize the Revolution."

In 1793, several workmen of the Faubourg St. Antoine declared they did not regard their marriages as legitimate, if they were not consecrated at the commune by the *magistrat*.

In 1791, Camille Desmoulins was married at

Saint Sulpice, according to the Catholic ritual; the family of his wife desiring it. But, in 1792, after the birth of his son Horace, he carried him himself to the Hôtel de Ville, and claimed the law of the Constituent Assembly. This was the first and only example of republican baptism. The most touching remembrance of all the Revolution was the act of its great writer, the good and eloquent Camille, and his charming Lucile, the act which led both to death (and to which it very directly contributed), so bold a proposition, in the height of the Reign of Terror, of a *Committee of Clemency.*

Indigent, rather than poor, and but little favored by nature in a physical point of view, and indeed with a slight stammer, Camille, in 1789, by the attraction of the heart, and the charm of a lively mind, conquered his pretty, graceful, accomplished, and relatively speaking, rich Lucile. But one portrait, perhaps, existed of her, a precious miniature (in the collection of Colonel Maurin). What has become of it now? In whose hands has it passed? This thing belongs to France. I pray the owner, whoever he may be, to remember it, and give it to us, that it may

be placed in the museum, whilst awaiting the Revolutionary one, which will be founded sooner or later.

Lucile was the daughter of a clerk of the finances, and of a beautiful and excellent wife, who, it has been pretended, was the mistress of the Minister of the Finances, Terray. Her portrait is that of a pretty woman, of the middle class, her name denotes it: Lucile Duplessis Laridon. Pretty, but obstinate; she was a little female Desmoulins. Her charming little face, agitated, stormy, and fantastic, breathed of *France free* (the beautiful pamphlet of her husband). The love of a man of genius, it was obvious, had inoculated her with genius.*

We cannot resist the pleasure of copying this child-like page, in which this young wife, twenty years old, relates her emotions on the night of the 10th August:—

* She loved him even to wishing to die with him. Nevertheless did he possess entirely, without reserve, this devoted heart? Who can affirm it? She was passionately loved by an inferior man (the celebrated Fréron). She has an anxious expression in this portrait; her life was often open to remark; it has been obscure. Poor Lucile! I am afraid thou hast drank too deeply of this cup, the Revolution is in thee. How gloriously thou hast extricated thyself by death.

"The 8th August, I returned from the country; already all minds were much excited; I had some Marseillais to dinner, we amused ourselves very well. After dinner we went to M. Danton. His mother was crying, she could not have been more sorrowful; her child looked stupid. Danton was firm; I laughed as if I was crazy. They feared that the affair had not taken place; though I was not at all sure; I told them, as if I was certain of it, that it had taken place. 'But how can you laugh thus?' said Madame Danton to me. 'Alas!' answered I, 'it prophesies that I will shed plenty of tears this evening.' The weather was delightful, and we took a walk in the streets, which were filled with people: several *sans-culottes* passed, crying 'Long life to the nation!' Then crowds on horseback, and lastly, an immense number of troops. I was afraid. I said to Madame Danton: 'Let us go away.' She laughed at my fears; but was obliged to confess, that she was also afraid. I said to his mother, 'Adieu, it will not be long before you hear the tocsin.' Arrived at her house, I saw that all were arming themselves. Camille, my dear Camille, came with a gun. *Mon Dieu!* I rushed into the alcove, and

hid my face in my hands, commencing to weep. However, not wishing to show so much weakness, and to say aloud to Camille, that I did not wish him to join; I watched the moment when I could speak to him without being heard, and told him all my fears. He reassured me, saying that he would not leave Danton. I found since that he exposed himself a great deal. Fréron had an air as if determined to perish. 'I am tired of life,' said he, 'I only seek to die.' At each patrol that appeared I thought to see them for the last time. I hid myself in the *salon*, which was dark, so as not to see all this preparation. Our patriots set out; I seated myself near the bed, overwhelmed with grief; I sometimes fell into a slumber; and, when I talked, I raved. Danton went to bed—he had not a very worried air, and scarcely went out. Midnight approached; they came to seek him several times; at last he set out for the Commune. The tocsin of the Cordeliers rang for a long time. Alone, bathed in tears, kneeling by the window, hiding my face in the handkerchief, I listened to the sound of this fatal bell. Danton returned. Several times they came to bring us good and bad news; I thought I per-

ceived that their project was to go to the Tuileries; I told them so, whilst sobbing. I thought I was going to faint. Madame Robert was asking everybody for her husband. 'If he perishes,' said she to me, 'I will not survive him. But this Danton, this rallying-point! If my husband perishes, I am wife enough to poniard him.' Camille returned at one o'clock; he slept on my shoulder. Madame Danton seemed to prepare herself for the death of her husband. In the morning the cannon was fired. She listened, turned pale, and sank down, fainting. 'What is to become of us, my poor Camille? I cannot breathe. Great God! if it is true that thou dost exist, save these men who are worthy of thee. We wish to be free: O God! what does it not cost us!'"

Lucile, who so childishly shows her woman's heart, was a heroine in death.

She must be seen at the decisive moment when Desmoulins and his friends were deliberating whether he would take the decisive, and probably fatal step, of claiming the liberties of the press and tribune, fettered by the arrest of his friend,

Fabré d'Eglantine, if he dared to place himself in opposition to the torrent of the Reign of Terror!

Who does not see at this moment the danger of the poor artist? Let us enter this humble and glorious house (in the street Ancienne Comedie, near the street Dauphine). On the first floor dwelt Fréron. On the second, Camille Desmoulins, and his charming Lucile; their terrified friends came to entreat, warn, arrest, and show them the abyss. A man, by no means timid, General Brune, an intimate friend, was with them one morning, and counselled prudence. Camille made Brune breakfast with him, and, without denying that he was right, tried to convert him. It was at a time when the enthusiastic friend of Lucile, Fréron, wrote her an account of the victories and perils of Toulon. Camille, also, in his way, was, and wished to be, considered a hero: "*Edamus et bibamus*," said he, in Latin, to Brune, so as not to let Lucile understand; "*cras enim moriemur*." He, nevertheless, spoke of his devotion and resolution in so touching a manner, that Lucile ran to embrace him: "Leave him," said she, "leave him to fulfil his mission; he it is who will save France. Those

who think otherwise shall not partake of my chocolate."

Fréron, the friend of Camille, and passionate admirer of his wife, wrote an account of the part he had in the taking of Toulon, and how he mounted the batteries, sword in hand. I very willingly believe that Camille wanted to honor himself in the eyes of Lucile. He was only a great writer; he wanted to be a hero.

The seventh number of the *Vieux Cordelier*, so bold against the two governing committees, and the eighth, against Robespierre (published in 1836), caused the destruction of Camille, involving him with Danton's trial.

The great emotion which the trial excited, and the innumerable crowd which surrounded the Palace of Justice with so favorable a leaning towards the accused, led to the belief that, if the prisoners of the Luxembourg managed to get out, they could lead the people with them. But the prison tamed the man; no one had arms, and very few courage.

A woman gave it to them. The young wife of Desmoulins wandered about, distracted with sorrow, around the Luxembourg. Camille was

clinging to the bars, gazing at and writing to her the most heart-rending letters which have ever pierced the heart of man. She also saw at this horrible moment that she had passionately loved her husband. Young and brilliant, she had received with pleasure the homage of General Dillon and of Fréron. The latter was in Paris, but did not dare do anything for them. Dillon was in the Luxembourg, drinking like a true Irishman, and playing cards with the last new-comer. Camille had sacrificed himself for France and Lucile. She also had destroyed herself for him.

The first day, she addressed herself to the heart of Robespierre. It had been thought that Robespierre would marry her. She recalls to him, in her letter, that he had been the witness of their marriage, that he was their first friend, and that Camille had only worked to increase his glory, adding this speech of a woman who feels herself young, charming, to be regretted, and whose life is precious: "Thou wilt kill both of us; to strike him is to kill me."

There was no answer. She wrote to her admirer, Dillon: "They talk of re-acting September. Would it not be a man's desire at least

to defend his life?" The prisoners blushed at receiving this lesson from a woman, and resolved to exert themselves. It is plain that they did not wish to commence until after Lucile, throwing herself in the midst of the crowd, should arouse the people.

Dillon, brave, though an indiscreet talker, whilst playing cards, half drunk, with a certain Laflotte, related to him all the affair. Laflotte listened and talked of it. He was a republican; but shut up there, without any hope of escape, he was fearfully tempted. He did not denounce them that evening (3d April), but waited all night, perhaps still hesitating. In the morning, he delivered up his soul in exchange for his life; to say all, he sold his honor. It was by this unworthy means that Danton and Camille Desmoulins were killed, and, some days after, Lucile, with several prisoners of the Luxembourg, all strangers to the affair, not even having heard it mentioned.

The only one of the accused who showed great courage was Lucile Desmoulins. She appeared intrepid, and worthy of her glorious name. She

declared that if they made a September, "it was their duty to defend their lives."

There was not a man, whatever may have been his opinions, whose heart was not torn asunder by this death. She was not a political woman, like Corday or Roland; it was simply a woman, a young girl, to look at her, a perfect child. Alas! what had she done? wanted to save a lover. Her husband, the good Camille, the pleader for mankind. This intrepid and charming woman died gloriously, in the accomplishment of the holiest duty.

Her mother, the beautiful and good Madame Duplessis, overwhelmed by this act, which she could not have suspected, wrote to Robespierre, who could not or would not answer. It is said that he had loved Lucile, and wanted to marry her. It would have been believed that he loved her still, if he had answered. He would have given others a hold on him to compromise him. This prudence was universally execrated. Every man's feeling was aroused and expressed. The people had but one voice, without distinction of party (those voices which cause so much unhappiness): "Ah! this is too much!"

What had they done in inflicting this torture on the human soul? they had raised up a cruel war in all minds, awoke against them a blind, brutish, terrible and powerful influence, a savage sensibility which, trampling on principles, shed rivers of blood, to avenge the death of one man, and destroys nations, in order to save individuals.*

* "From the prison of the Luxembourg, duodi germinal; 5 o'clock in the morning:—

"A kind sleep has enabled me to lose sight of my evils. We are free when we sleep; not feeling the bonds of captivity; heaven has had pity on me. But a moment ago, I was embracing thee, Horace, and Durousse, who was in the house; but our child had lost an eye, by a tumor, and sorrow for this accident awoke me. I found myself in my cell; it was scarcely light. Being no longer able to see thee, and hear thy answers, for thou and thy mother had been talking to me, I arose to talk on paper to thee. But, opening my windows, the thought of my solitude, these frightful bars and bolts, which separated me from thee, vanquished all my firmness of soul; and in the midst of my sobs, I cried out, in my tomb: Lucile! Lucile! O, my dear Lucile, where art thou? (*Here are traces of tears.*) Last evening, I had such a moment; my heart was nearly broken, when I saw thy mother in the garden; by a mechanical movement, I threw myself on my knees, against the bars; I clasped my hands, as if imploring her pity; she, who I am sure, was shuddering for me. I saw her sorrow (*here are again traces of tears*), as she dropped her handkerchief and veil, not being able any longer to support the sight. When you come again, seat yourself a little nearer, so that I may see you better; I do not think there is any danger. My spectacles are not good; I wish you would buy me a pair like those I had six

months ago, not silver, but steel, with two supporters, which fasten to the head. Ask for number 15; the dealer will know what that means; but I especially pray thee, Lolotte, by my eternal love, send me thy portrait; entreat the painter to have compassion on one who is suffering for having had too much compassion for others, and give thee two sittings a day. Amidst the horrors of my prison, the day I receive your portrait will be a holiday, a day of intoxication and delight. Whilst waiting, send me some of thy hair, which shall find a place near my heart. My dear Lucile! I am returning to the day of our first loves, when every one interested me who came out of thy house, and for that reason only. Yesterday, when the citizen returned who brought thee my letter: 'Well; have you seen her?' I said, as I did formerly to the Abbé Laudreville, and I found myself looking at him as if there remained something of thee on his clothes or person. He is a kind soul, since he brought thee my letter without any delay. It seems to me that I will see him twice a day, morning and evening; this messenger of our sorrows is as dear to me as the messenger of our pleasures was formerly. I discovered a chink in my apartment, to which applying my ear, I heard groans; I hazarded a few words, and heard the voice of a suffering sick man. He asked my name; and upon my replying, 'Merciful Providence!' he cried, falling back on his bed, from whence he had tried to arise; and I plainly recognized the voice of Fabre d'Eglantine. 'Yes, I am Fabre,' said he, 'but thou here; is the contre-revolution then finished?' We did not dare, however, to speak to each other, for fear hatred should deprive us of this feeble consolation, and, if they had heard us, we would have been separated, and placed in closer confinement; for I have a fireplace, and my room is as good as a cell can be. But, my dear friend, thou canst not imagine what it is to be imprisoned, and not know the reason, without having been examined, or receiving a single paper; it is living and being dead together; it is existing only to feel that one is in a tomb! They say that innocence is calm and courageous. If it had

been Pitt or Cobourg who had treated me so harshly; but my colleagues! Robespierre, who signed the order for my imprisonment! the Republic, after all I have done for it! This is my reward for so many efforts and sacrifices! I found Hérault Séchelles, Simon, Ferroux, Chaumette, and Antonelle here; they are less unfortunate in knowing the crime of which they are accused. I, who, for the Republic, have laid myself open for five years to so much hatred, and so many perils; I, who have guarded my purity in the midst of the Revolution; I, who had no one's pardon to ask in the world but thine, dear Lolotte, which thou hast granted, because thou knowest that my heart, in spite of its weaknesses, is not unworthy of thee; it is me who those men calling themselves my friends, and republicans, have secretly thrown in prison, as a conspirator! Socrates drank the hemlock; but, at least, he saw his wife and friends in prison. How hard it is to be separated from thee! The greatest criminal would be too much punished if torn from a Lucile otherwise than by death, which causes the sorrow of separation to be felt but for a moment; but a guilty person could never have been thy husband; thou lovest me, for having lived only for the happiness of my fellow-citizens. Some one calls me. It was the commissioners of the revolutionary tribunal, who had come to interrogate me. They only put me this question: If I had conspired against the Republic. How ridiculous! and can they thus insult the purest republicanism? I see the fate which awaits me. Adieu, my Lolotte, my dear Lolotte; bid my father adieu. Thou seest in me an example of the barbarity and ingratitude of men. My last moments will do thee no dishonor. You see that my fears had foundation, that my presentiments were true. I married a woman made heavenly by her virtues; I have been a good husband, and son, and would have made a good father. I take with me the regrets of all good republicans and men. I die thirty-four years old; it is strange that, for five years, I have passed so many precipices of the Revolution, without falling into them, and can calmly turn to my too numerous writings, which all

breathe the same philanthropy, the same desire of rendering my fellow-citizens free and happy, and which can never be touched by the axe of tyrants. How plain it is that power intoxicates all men, that all say, like Denis, of Syracuse: 'Tyranny is a good epitaph.' But, console thyself, desolate widow; the epitaph of thy poor Camille is more glorious; it is that of Brutus and Caton, the tyrannies. O my dear Lucille, I was born to make verses, to defend the unfortunate, to render thee happy, and to form an Otaheite with thy mother, my father, and some few others. I have dreamed of a republic, which all the world would adore. I could not have believed that men were so savage and unjust. Who would have thought that some jests, against my colleagues, in my writings, could have effaced the remembrance of my services. I do not hide that I die a victim of my jests and friendship for Danton. I thank my assassins for allowing me to die with him and Philippeau; since our colleagues are cowardly enough to slander us, and lend an ear to calumnies, which I am sure are the very grossest. I see that we will die victims of our courage in denouncing traitors, and of our love for truth. We can carry this testimony with us, since we perish, the last of the republicans. Pardon, my dear friend, that I have lost the time in which we are separated, in occupying myself with my memoirs. I ought rather to have employed myself in forgetting them. I pray thee not to stand in the street, when I am walking to death, nor call me by thy cries; they will rend my heart, even in the depths of the tomb. See to my Horace; talk to him of me. Thou wilt tell him what no one else will. How dearly I should have loved him. In spite of my affliction, I believe there is a God. My blood will blot out my sins; God will recompense what I have of good, my virtues and my love of liberty. Adieu, my wife, I leave thee good friends on earth, all that there is of virtue and sensibility in men. Adieu, Lucile, my dear Lucile, Horace, Annette, and my father; I feel the end of life drawing near. I still see Lucile; my crossed arms hold her tightly, my bound hands embrace her, and my separated head is reposing on her. Death approaches."

CHAPTER XXVII.

EXECUTION OF WOMEN—SHOULD WOMEN BE EXECUTED?

The executions of women were terrible. The most miserable politician ought to have suppressed the scaffold for women. This killed the Republic. The sublime, intrepid, and calm death of Charlotte Corday, was the foundation of a new religion. That of Dubarry, struggling with fear, a poor old creature of flesh, who, feeling death in advance, draws back with all her strength, shrieking, and obliged to be dragged, awoke all the fibres of animal pity. It was said that the knife would not enter her fat neck. All shuddered at the recital.

But the most terrible blow was the execution of Lucile; no one left so much regret and rage, nor was more bitterly avenged.

We know very well that a society which does not occupy itself with the education of women,

and has not a mistress, is a lost one. The *preventive* medicine is as much more necessary here, as the *curative* is as nearly impossible. *There is no real means of repression against women.* Simple imprisonment is a difficult thing: "*Quis custodiet ipses custodes!*" They corrupt and break everything; no inclosure is strong enough for them. But to show them on the scaffold! Merciful heaven! A government which commits this folly, guillotines itself. Nature places the law of love and the perpetuity of mankind above all others, and by this means alone, surrounds women with a mystery (absurd at the first glance). *They are responsible, but not punishable.* During the whole course of the Revolution, I see them violent and intriguant, and often more guilty than men. But, who even strikes them, is struck himself. Whoever punishes them, is punished. Whatever they may have done, under whatever aspect they have appeared, they overthrow justice, destroy all thought of it, cause it to be resisted and cursed. Young, they cannot be punished. Why not? Because they are young, full of love, happiness, and fecundity. Old, they cannot be punished. Why not? Because they are old,

that is to say, having been mothers, they remain sacred, their gray hairs reminding you of your own mother. *Enceintes!* Ah, here it is that poor justice dares not say a single word; to yield, humiliate, and, if necessary, be unjust to itself. Here is a power which braves the law; if the law is stubborn, so much the worse; it cruelly denies itself, appears a frightful, impious enemy of God! Perhaps women protested against all this; perhaps they demanded if it was not to make them children always to refuse them the scaffold; they will say that they want to work, and suffer the consequences of their acts. But what to do? It is not our fault if nature has made them, not only weak, as it is said, but infirm daughters of a starry world, as by their unequal temperaments, they are unable to perform all the stern duties of a political world. They have not the less an enormous influence, which, up to this time, has been more or less fatal; this has plainly been shown in our Revolutions. It was principally women who have caused them to fail; their intrigues have undermined, and their deaths (often merited, but always impolitic) have powerfully served the contre-revolution. Let us,

however, understand one thing. If they are, by their passionate temperaments, dangerous in politics, they have been better fitted than men for administration. By their sedentary habits, their tidy ways, their natural desire of satisfying, pleasing, and contenting all, they make excellent clerks. At the present time, many have post-offices. The Revolution, which overturned everything, by throwing men into active careers, ought to have employed women in sedentary ones. I see one woman mentioned amongst the clerks of the Committee of Public Good.—*Register of the Reports of the Committee, 5th June*, 1793, page 79.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CATHERINE THEOT, THE MOTHER OF GOD.—ROBESPIERRE THE MESSIAH. (JUNE, 1794.)

THE times had arrived at the height of fanaticism. The excess of emotions had crushed, humiliated, and discouraged reason. Without speaking of La Vendée, where nothing was seen but miracles, a God had appeared in Artois. The dead were brought to life in '94. In Lyons, a prophetess had had great success; one hundred thousand souls, it was said, had taken their departure, and set off, not knowing where. In Germany, innumerable sects of the illuminés spread not only among the people, but in the higher classes: the King of Prussia was joined with them. But no man in Europe excited so great interest in these mysteries as Maximilian. His life, his elevation to supreme power by the single influence of speech, was it not the most astonishing of

all miracles? Several letters came to him, announcing him as the Messiah. These distinctly saw in the heavens *the constellation of Robespierre.* The 2d August, '93, the president of the Jacobins announced the *Saviour who had come*, without naming him. Many people had his portrait suspended in their houses, as a holy image. Women, and even generals, carried a little Robespierre in their bosoms, kissing and praying before this sainted image. What is more astonishing, is that those who saw him constantly and were brought nearer to him, for instance, a baroness, Madame Chalabre (who aided him in his police), not the less regarded him as a being of another world. They clasped their hands, saying: "Yes, Robespierre, thou art God."

A dark corridor ran from the little hôtel (now demolished), where the Committee of Security sat, to the Tuileries, where the Committee of Public Safety held their meetings. Policemen brought sealed packages here. Little girls brought letters or packets to the great disciple of the future Saviour, Madame Chalabre, mother of the manager of the gambling saloons.

We have elsewhere spoken of the old idiot in

the street Montmartre, praying before two busts: "God save Marinel and Pétion! God save Marinel and Pétion!" twelve hours a day. There is no doubt that in '94 she prayed as many hours for Robespierre.

The bitter Cevenol, Rabaut-Saint-Etienne, showed very well that these ridiculous mummeries, this crowd of devotees, and this patience of Robespierre in supporting them, was the vulnerable point, the heel of Achilles, through which the hero would be pierced. Girey-Dupré, in a sprightly and witty ballad, struck it, but just in passing. Was it not the subject of the comedy of Fabré d'Eglantine, which was so soon put down, and for which perhaps Fabré disappeared? In order to give a formula to the accusation, a fact was wanted, an occasion which could be seized upon. Robespierre gave it himself. In his police instincts, he was insatiable; curious for facts against his enemies, and the Committee of Safety, which he wanted to crush, he willingly searched in the accounts of this committee. He found, took, and carried away papers relating to the Duchess of Bourbon, and refused to return them. This made them curious; and the com-

mittee procuring copies, saw that this business, so dear to Robespierre, was an affair with the illuminati. What secret motive had he in protecting the *illuminés*, of keeping them from finishing their business?

These sects have never been indifferent to politics. The Duke of Orleans had much to do with Freemasons and Templars, of whom, it was said, he was the Grand Templar. The jansenists, forced by persecution to become a secret society, by the skilfulness seldom to be met with, by which they organized the mysterious notoriety of the New Ecclesiastics, had merited the particular attention of the Jacobins. The ingenious picture revealing their secret mechanism was in 1790 the sole ornament of the Jacobin library. Robespierre, from '89 to '91, dwelt in the Saint-onge au Marais, near the street Touraine, at the door almost of the sanctuary where these demoniacs of expiring jansenism performed their last miracles; the principal act was crucifying women, who descended from the cross with improved appetites. A violent return of fanaticism, after the Reign of Terror, was easy to foresee. But who would profit by it? An adept was practising in

the chateau of the duchess, the Carthusian Dom Gerle, a colleague of Robespierre in the Constituent Assembly, the one who astonished them, by asking as an easy thing that Catholicism should be the religion of the state. At the same time, Dom Gerle wanted the Assembly to proclaim the truth of the prophecies of a crazy girl, Susan Labrousse. Dom Gerle kept up an intimacy with his old colleague; often going to see him, honoring him as his patron; and, without doubt, to please him, lived at a cabinet-maker's. He had obtained from him a certificate of civism.

A good republican, the Carthusian was not less a prophet. In the garret in the *pays latin*, the spirit had been breathed on him by an old idiot woman, who was called the Mother of God. Catherine Theot (for that was her name) was assisted in these mysteries by two young and charming women, a brunette and a blond, called the *Singer* and *Dove*. They brought many customers to the garret. Royalists went there, magnetizers, fools, coxcombs, and rogues. We are ignorant how far a man as grave as Robespierre mingled in these mummeries. We only know that the old woman had three arm-chairs, white,

red, and blue; she was seated on the first, her son, Dom Gerle, in the second, on her left; but whose was the other, the chair of honor of the right of the Mother of God? Was it not for her eldest son, the *Saviour who was coming?* However ridiculous the thing may have been in itself, and whatever interest was had in showing it as such, there were two points which showed the attempt at a coarser association between Christian illumination, revolutionary mysticism, and the inauguration of a government of prophets.

"The first seal of the Gospel was the announcement of the Word; the second, the separation of worships; *the third, the Revolution; the fourth, the death of kings;* the fifth, the reunion of the peoples; the sixth, the combat of the exterminating angel; and the seventh, the universal happiness, *watched over by the prophets.*" "On the day of resurrection, where will the Mother of God be? On her throne, in the Pantheon, *between her two prophets.*"

The spy, Senart, who found means to be initiated, in order to betray and arrest them, found, he said, at the Mother's, a letter written in her name to Robespierre as her first prophet, to

the son of the Supreme Being, to the Redeemer and Messiah. The two Gascons, Barrère and Vadier, who, together, concocted the malicious report which the clubs threw out against the Convention, placed there (as ingredients in the caldron of the incantation) the most contradictory things; amongst others, a portrait of the little Capet, found at Saint Cloud. This gave a pretext to speak of the restoration of royalty, in the report of royalism. The Assembly, at first disconcerted, did not know what to believe, but they understood, little by little. Under the dark and mournful utterance of Vadier, they felt the comic power of wit. Jests in the mouth of a grave man cause a hearty laughter, to which there is no resistance. The effect was so great, that, under the knife of the guillotine, in the fire, and under punishments, the Assembly would have laughed the same. They writhed on the benches.

It was carried, with enthusiasm, that this report should be sent to the forty-four thousand communes of the Republic, to all the administrations and armies. The impression of perhaps a hundred thousand copies was made!

Nothing more directly contributed to the fall of Robespierre.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE TWO SAINT-AMARANTHES. (JUNE, 1794.)

This affair of the Mother of God was mixed up with another accusation, and one still less merited, of which Robespierre was the object.

It was gratuitously supposed that the Jacobins had sought proselytes even in the gambling-houses, and disciples amongst the ladies who received the players. In reality, Robespierre the elder and Robespierre the younger were malignantly confounded, the latter only frequenting these houses.

Robespierre the younger was a lawyer, a vulgar yet easy speaker, a social man, and fond of pleasure, not feeling how much the high and terrible reputation of his brother demanded circumspection. In his missions, when his name gave him a very great and difficult part to play, he was not watchful enough over himself.

His youth and kind heart had caused him eagerly to seize the hope that his brother would soften the Revolution. He did not hide this hope, nor did he pay any regard to the obstacles and delays which prolonged this moment. In Provence, he showed his humanity by saving the Girondist communes. At Paris, he had the courage to save several persons, amongst others the director of the clergy funds (who was afterwards the father-in-law of Geoffrey Saint-Hilaire).

In the precipitation of his anti-terrorist zeal, he sometimes silenced and humiliated violent patriots who were hastening the Revolution. In the Jura, for instance, he royally imposed silence on the representative Bernard de Saintes. This exciting scene gave an unlimited confidence to the contra-revolutionists of the Jura. They carelessly said (as reported by one of their number, Nodier): "We have the protection of M. M. de Robespierre."

In Paris, Robespierre the younger frequented a suspected house in the Palais Royal, at the corner of the street Vivienne, opposite the steps of the old Hôtel Helvetius. The steps, as is well known, were the centre of the stock-jobbers,

exchange intriguers, dealers in gold and assignats, and dealers in women. Sumptuous gambling-houses were on all sides, haunted by the aristocrats. I have elsewhere mentioned how the old parties, in proportion as they dissolved, came to die here, between women and roulette. Here the Constituents, the Talleyrands and Chapeliers, ended their course. Several of the Girondists came here also. Robespierre the younger, spoiled by his princely missions, also loved to find here some remains of the old society.

The gambling-house was kept by two very pretty ladies; the daughter was seventeen, and the mother not yet forty. The latter, Madame de Saint-Amaranthe, was, she said, the widow of a *garde-du-corps*, who was killed the 6th of October. She had married her daughter in a family whose name was famous in the police, to the young Sartine, son of Pompadour's minister, who has been immortalized by Latude.

Madame de St. Amaranthe, without much mystery, left the portraits of the king and queen under the eyes of the players. This display of royalty did no harm to the house. The rich remained royalists. But these ladies had need of high

patriotic protectors. The young Saint-Amaranthe was very much loved by the Jacobin Desfieux, agent of the Committee of Safety (when this committee was under Chabot), intimate friend, and boarding in the same chamber with Proly and Junius Frey, the famous patriotic banker, who gave his sister to Chabot. All this appeared in the trial of Desfieux with Proly, in the compromised prosecution of the Hebertistes.

Desfieux had been executed with Hébert, the 24th March. Saint-Just sent to the Committee of Safety information against the house which he frequented, which, on the 31st, caused the Saint Amaranthes and Sartine to be arrested. (*Committee of Safety*, register 640, 10th germinal).

But Robespierre the younger, as well as Desfieux, was a friend of this house; it is this, without doubt, which enabled these ladies to remain in prison so long without sentence being pronounced. This Committee of Safety, to which it was necessary to apply in order to obtain the delay, was instructed in the business. It thus had a resource, a sword against its enemy. A grand point! The thing, skilfully arranged, would

make Robespierre appear as a patron of gambling-houses!

Robespierre! which of the two? They were very careful not to say *the youngest.* The thing would lose all its force.

He was soon warned, without doubt, by his brother himself, who made his confession. He saw the abyss and shuddered. Did he go to the clubs? where would the clubs send him? they did not know. What is certain is, that on the evening of the 25th prairial (14th June), two terrible things took place between them.

He reflected that the affair was irremediable, that the consequences would only be increased by his resistance, that he must obtain a party, draw over the clubs, and oppose this vain joy of malignity, by a new power which would enable him, perhaps, to strike the committees, at any rate to take a decisive step in his narrow path of legal dictation.

Thus, then, when the old Vadier said to him, with a watchful expression: "We will call the witnesses for the Saint-Amaranthes affair to-morrow," he made some objections, more calmly than they expected.

Every one believed Robespierre to be connected with the Saint-Amaranthes, whom, according to all appearances, he did not even know. The want of probability in the story made no difference. They thought it natural that this darkly austere man, so cruelly agitated, and embittered in the pursuit of his tragic destiny, advancing to it like a Barrère, a marquis of the terror, should make merry in the house of ladies so noted as they were. Furious credulity drew a band tightly over their eyes.

There was fear, however, that equity and good sense would resume their influence, and some would remember the very simple fact of there being two Robespierres.

In June there was a great commotion, with the solemn punishment, accompanied with incredible preparations, of the pretended *assassins of Robespierre*, amongst whom were placed the Saint-Amaranthes. The drama of the execution was prepared with care, and had great effect, offering fifty-four persons, all wearing the dress which, until then, had only been seen on Charlotte Corday, the sinister red chemise of parricides and those who assassinated the representatives, the

fathers of the people. The procession took three hours to go from the Conciergerie to the square of the Revolution, and the execution filled another; so that in this long exhibition of four entire hours, the people could see, count, know, and examine *the assassins of Robespierre*, and learn their histories.

Cannons followed the carts, also a number of troops. A pompous and formidable preparation, which had never been seen since the execution of Louis XVI. "What!" said they, "all this to avenge a man! What more could they do *if Robespierre was king?*"

There were five or six pretty women, and three very young. It was at them, especially, the people looked, a sight they could not endure; and around these charming women were their entire families, Saint-Amaranthe with all hers, and Renault with all hers, with tears and mutual regrets, calling from one to the other, with heart-broken cries, formed a complete tragedy in each carriage. Madame de St. Amaranthe, at first proud and resolute, constantly fainted.

Mademoiselle Grandmaison, an actress in the Italian Theatre, raised the interest to its height.

Some time before mistress of Sartine, who married the young Saint-Amaranthe, she had remained faithful to him. For him she had accomplished her own destruction. They were together, seated in the same cart, two unfortunate creatures, made sisters in death, from dying in the same love.

A horribly calumnious rumor was spread among the crowd, that Saint-Just wanted to have the young Saint Amaranthe, and that, influenced by jealousy and rage, he had denounced her.

That Robespierre should have abandoned the Saint Amaranthes, who were supposed to be his disciples, caused great astonishment.

All the grades of horror and ridicule seemed united in this affair. The Committee of Safety who had arranged the thing, in an atrocious drama, mingling the true and false, had surpassed at the same time both comedy and tragedy, distancing all the great masters. The steadfast and irreproachable one, surprised in the performance of so bold and secret a step, shown naked between two masks, was too sweet food for malignity, not to be believed and swallowed, without abating one word. Philosopher at the cabi-

net-maker's, the Messiah of the old people in the street Saint Jacques, and patron of gambling in the Palais Royal! Make these three parts walk in front, under the pallid face of unpitiful censure! Shakspeare was humiliated, Molière conquered; Talma and Garrick were as nothing along side of it.

At the same time when they reflected on his cowardly selfishness in throwing aside and abandoning all his connections! on the infinite prudence of this Messiah, this saviour, who only saved himself, leaving his apostles to Judas, with Mary Magdalene, to be crucified in his place! Oh! the fury of contempt overwhelmed all souls!

Yesterday, dictator, pope, and God! To-day, the unfortunate Robespierre is covered with ignominy.

Such was the bitter fury and rapid impression of calumny on minds well prepared for it. All his life he had used vague, and too often, false accusations. It seemed as if the calumny, so often cast by him, should be returned at the last day by this black wave of bloody mire.

In the morning, newspaper venders, with

frightful clamors, cried *the holy guillotine, the fifty-four in red mantles, the assassins of Robespierre*, and *the mysteries of the Mother of God.* A cloud of little pamphlets, millions of stinging flies, born in the hour of the storm, flew about under these titles. The newspaper venders, Maratists and Hebertists, always regretting their patrons, spread, with infernal cries, the monstrous publicity of the report, already printed by decree, to the number of fifty thousand.

They were not left quiet; but nothing was done. The combat of the great powers was carried on over their heads. Robespierre's commune boldly arrested them; but the Committee of Safety instantly released them. They only became more savage, more furious in their cries. From the Assembly to the Jacobins' hall, and as far as the Duplay House opposite the Assumption, all the street St. Honoré echoed with their cries: the windows even shook. *The great anger of Père Duchesne* seemed to return triumphant in their thousand unruly and distorted mouths.

CHAPTER XXX.

INDIFFERENCE TO LIFE.—THE RAPID COURSE OF LOVE IN THE PRISONS. (1793–94.)

Such immense prodigality of the sorrows of death produced its ordinary effect: an astonishing indifference to life.

The Reign of Terror was generally a lottery. It struck by chance, very often on one side, thus failing in its object. This great sacrifice of efforts and blood, this terrible accumulation of hatred, was a pure loss. The inutility of what was done was confusedly and instinctively felt; thus great discouragement, rapid and sad demoralization, a sort of moral cholera, was the consequence.

When the moral nerve is broken, two contrary effects are the consequence. Some determine on living at any price, sinking deep into the mire; others, from ennui and disgust, hasten death, or, at least, do not fly from it. This first commenced

at Lyons; the too frequent executions had exhausted the spectators; one of them, on returning, said: "What can I do to be guillotined?" Five prisoners in Paris escaped from the gendarmes; they only wanted to go once again to the Vaudeville. One returned to the tribunal, and said: "I cannot find the others; can you tell me where our gendarmes are? Give me some information."

Such signs indicated too clearly that the Reign of Terror had exhausted itself. The struggle against nature could no longer be sustained. Nature, all-powerful and indomitable nature, which nowhere expands more fully than under the influence of the tomb, reappears victoriously, under a thousand unexpected forms. War, terror, and death, all that seemed to be against it, gave it new triumphs. Women were never so strong. They complicated and disturbed everything. The atrocity of the law rendered almost legitimate the weakness of pardoning. They boldly said, whilst consoling the prisoner: "If I am not nurse to-day, it will be too late to-morrow." In the morning, pretty, young, heedless creatures were met driving the cabriolet at full speed; they were humane women, who solicited

and followed the rulers of the day. From them to the prisons. Charity led them a long way. Comforters outside, or prisoners within, none disputed. To be *enceinte*, for these last, was a chance of life.

One word was constantly repeated by all: "*Nature!* follow nature! yield to nature." The word *life* succeeded in 1793: "Life, gliding, fading away; to lose his life, &c."

They shuddered to lose it; they seized it on its flight, and economized the smallest parts of it. Of human respect, there was no remembrance. Captivity in this sense, was a complete deliverance. Grave men and women gave themselves up to foolish parades and derisions of death. Their favorite amusement was the rehearsal of the final drama, the trial of the last toilette, and the graces of the guillotine. These sorrowful parades permitted audacious exhibitions of beauty; they wanted what death was so soon to extinguish to be regretted. If a royalist is to be believed, ladies of quality hazarded this display on badly fastened chairs. Even in the dark Conciergerie, where they almost always came to die, the tragic and sacred grate, witness to

the manly predictions of Madame Roland, often saw, at certain hours, scenes much less serious, of which night and death kept the secret.

As the assignat did not inspire any confidence, business was detested; man was not sure of being any more lasting than paper; all ties were blunted, broken, and reformed with an extraordinary versatility. Existence, so to say, was volatilized. Nothing was solid; all was fluid, evaporating like gas. Lavoisier established and demonstrated the great modern idea: solid, fluid, and gas, three forms of one substance.

What is physical man and life? A solidified gas.*

* I am happy to find that Liebig (in his *New Letters on Chemistry*, Letter 36) makes this just observation, which in this extreme mobility of the physical being, guarantees to me the stability of my soul and its independence: "The immaterial being, conscious, thoughtful, and sensible, which inhabits the box of condensed air called man, is it a simple effect of his structure and interior disposition? Many believe so. But if that was true, man would be identical with the ox or any other inferior animal from which he does not differ, as to composition and disposition." The more chemistry proves to me that I am materially like the animal, the more it obliges me to turn my energies, so varied and superior to his, in a different direction.

CHAPTER XXXI.

EACH PARTY DESTROYED BY WOMEN.

If, from the commencement, women added a new flame to revolutionary enthusiasm, we must say, to make amends for it, under the influence of a blind sensibility, they contributed in an early hour to the reaction; even when their influence was most honorable, they often prepared the destruction of parties.

Lafayette, by the disinterestedness of his character, in imitation of America, and through the friendship of Jefferson, etc., had gone very far. He was chiefly arrested by the influences of flattering women, who surrounded him, even by that of his wife, whose apparent resignation, sorrow, and virtue powerfully moved his heart. In her, he had in his own house a powerful advocate for royalty, powerful by her silent tears. It was not consoling for her to see her husband

make himself the gaoler of the king. Born a Noailles, living for a long time with her relations, in the convent of the Miramiones, one of the principal hotbeds of royalist fanaticism, she ended by flying to Auvergne, and forsaking her husband, who, little by little, became a champion of royalty.

The conquerors of Lafayette, the Girondists, have, as we have seen, been compromised, in the same way, by women. We have elsewhere enumerated the courageous imprudences of Madame Roland. We have seen the genius of Vergniaud, slumbering and growing effeminate under the soft and melting sounds of Mademoiselle Candeille's harp.

Robespierre, falsely accused of the frivolities of his brother, was rightly so for the fetichism of which he allowed himself to become the object, of the ridiculous adoration with which his devotees surrounded him. He truly received his death-blow from the affair of Catherine Théot.

There is the same thing to be observed, if we pass from republicans to royalists. The imprudences of the queen, her violence, faults and

connections with foreigners, contributed, more than anything else, to hasten the fate of royalty.

The Vendean women, in an early hour, worked to prepare and commence the civil war. But the blind fury of their zeal was also one of the things which caused their want of success. Their obstinacy in following the great army which crossed the Loire, in October, '93, contributed more than anything else to paralyze it. The most capable of the Vendeans, M. de Bonchamps, had hoped in the strength despair would give, when, having left his strong, his secluded Bocage, and marched into the open country, that the Vendeans would overrun France, whose army was on the frontiers. This wild boar's course demanded a rapidity, a terrible outburst, and a vigorous decision of men and soldiers. Bonchamps had not calculated that ten or twelve thousand women would surround the Vendean men, and insist on being led forward.

They thought it would be too dangerous to remain in their country. Adventurous, elsewhere, with the same excitement that they had commenced the civil struggle, they also wanted to run the last chances. They vowed

that they could proceed more quickly than men, that they could walk to the end of the world. Some, accustomed to a sedentary life, and others to a religious one (like the Abbess of Fontevrand), willingly embraced in imagination the unknown, yet free and warlike life of a crusade. If the Revolution was so poorly fought by men, why was it not conquered by women, if God wished it?

The aunt of one of my friends, until then a nun, was asked what she hoped for in following this great confused army, where she would run so many dangers. She martially answered: "To make the Convention tremble."

A great number of the Vendean women believed that the less impassioned men would have great need of being sustained and aroused by their energy. They wanted to make their husbands and lovers take the right direction, and to give courage to their priests. Crossing the Loire, there were very few boats, and, whilst waiting, they employed their time in confessing. The priests listened to them, seated on the hillocks along the bank.

The performance was disturbed by some stray

shots from the republican cannon. One of the confessors fled. His penitent caught him: "My father! absolution!" "You have it, my daughter." But she would not let go of him, but holding by his cassock, made him remain under the fire.

Notwithstanding their intrepidity, these ladies occasioned very great embarrassment to the army. Besides fifty carriages, into which they crowded, there were thousands, in carts, on horseback, on foot, and every way. Many dragged children along. Several were *enceinte*. They soon found the men to be different from what they were at their departure. The virtues of the Vendeans proceeded from habit; away from home, they became demoralized. The confidence in chiefs and priests disappeared; the first were suspected of wavering. As to the priests, their disputes, the villany of the Bishop of Agra, the intrigues of Bernier, their manners, until then hidden, all appeared cynical. The army lost its faith in them. There was no medium; devots yesterday, suddenly doubters to-day; many respected nothing. The Vendean women cruelly paid for the part they had had in the civil war.

Without speaking of the drownings which followed after the battle of Maus, some thirty women were instantly shot. Many others, it is true, were saved by the soldiers, who, giving their arms to the trembling ladies, drew them from the fray. As many as possible were hidden in the families of the town. Marceau, in his cabriolet, saved a young lady who had lost all her friends. She cared little for life, and did nothing to aid her liberator; she was judged, and perished. Some married those who saved them; but these marriages turned out badly; the implacable bitterness soon returning.

A young officer of Maus, named Goubin, found, on the evening of the battle, a poor young lady, hiding herself behind a door, not knowing where to go. He himself, a stranger in the town, and not knowing of any safer house, took her to his. This unfortunate creature, shivering with cold and fear, he placed in his own bed. An under-clerk, with six hundred francs, he had a cabinet, chair, and bed, and nothing more. For eight nights in succession he slept in his chair. Then fatigued and sick, he asked and obtained her permission to sleep with her dressed. A fortunate chance

enabled the young lady to return to her parents' house. He found that she was rich, and of a noble family, and (what is more astonishing) had a memory. She found means to have Goubin told that she wanted to marry him: "No, Mademoiselle; I am a republican; the blues ought to remain blues!"

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE REACTION BY WOMEN IN THE HALF-CENTURY WHICH FOLLOWED THE REVOLUTION.

After the 9th Thermidor, several things hastened the reaction:—

The great strictness of the revolutionary government, the tiresomeness of an order of things which imposed the greatest sacrifices on the feelings and heart. Great was the outburst of blind and irresistible pity.

We must not be astonished if women were the principal agents of the reaction.

The general carelessness of costume, the adoption of the language and habits of the people, the *open breasts* of the time had been branded by the name of impudence. In reality, the republican authority, in its growing severity, was unanimous in imposing, as a guarantee of civism, austerity of manners.

Moral *censure* was exercised, not only by magistrates, but by popular societies. More than once trials of adultery were carried to the Commune and the Jacobins. They all decided that the immoral man *was suspected as an aristocrat.* A grave and sinister designation, more dreaded than any other trouble.

There never was a government which more rigorously pursued girls of bad character.

But help was given to those who were mothers, of which so much has been said. In truth, if those girls who had once erred had not been cared for, the most part would have become prostitutes. The forsaken child goes to the hospitals, that is to say, it dies.

Balls and gambling (then synonymous with houses of prostitution) had almost disappeared.

The *salons*, where women had shone until 1792, were shut before 1793.

Women found themselves under control. With this pitiful government they could only be wives and mothers!

It burst out the 9th Thermidor. An overwhelming flood, a furious bacchanal commenced from that day.

The most horrible sight during the long march which they led Robespierre to conduct him to the scaffold, was the appearance of the windows, hired at any price. Unknown figures, hidden for a long time, came out in the sun. A world of riches and girls appeared on the balconies. Taking advantage of this violent reaction in public feeling, their fury dared to show itself. The women, especially, offered an intolerable spectacle. Impudent, half-naked, under pretence of July, their necks loaded with flowers, leaning upon velvet, with half their bodies in the street St. Honoré, and surrounded by men, they cried with a bitter voice: "Death! and the guillotine!" On this day they boldly resumed their grand toilettes, and, in the evening they *supped*. No one placed any restraint on themselves.

De Sade left prison the 10th Thermidor.

When the funeral procession arrived at the Assumption, in front of Duplay's house, the actresses had a grand scene. Furies danced around. A child was there in the very front, with a bucket of cow's blood, and a broom, throwing blood against the house. Robespierre shut his eyes. In the evening, these same bacchantes rushed to

Sainte-Pélagie, where Madame Duplay was, crying that they were the widows of Robespierre's victims. They forced the frightened jailers to open the doors, strangled the old woman, and hung her to the curtain-rods.

Paris again became very gay. There was famine, it is true. In the west and south, assassinations were frequent. The Palais Royal was filled to overflowing with gamblers, girls, and half-naked ladies, who shamed even the prostitutes. Then, the *balls of the victims* opened, where impudent luxury rolled in the orgy of its false mourning.

The *sensible man*, groaning, speculated in assignats and national property. The *black band* shed warm tears for relations they never had. Marquises, countesses, royalists, and actresses, boldly entered France, coming out of their prisons and hiding-places, and working, without any concealment, to royalize the Reign of Terror; they surrounded the Terrorists, fascinated the Thermidoreans, thrust their hand to murder, and sharpened the knife to fill the Republic with blood. A number of Montagnards, Tallien, Bentabole and Rovère, married into the nobility. The

butcher Legendre, who had for a long time sunk overwhelmed with blood, became suddenly terrible under the stimulus of the Contat; this malicious Suzanne of the *Figaro* of Beaumarchais threw her noose over the bull, and led him, with horns lowered, against the Jacobins.

There is no longer any need to recount these things. All this is no longer a Revolution, they are the commencements of the long reaction which has lasted for half a century.

CONCLUSION.

THE chief defect of this book, is that it does not fulfil its title. It does not give *the women of the Revolution*, but some heroines, some more or less celebrated women. It relates some brilliant virtues. It is silent upon a world of obscure sacrifices, the more meritorious from not being sustained by glory.

What women were in '89, in the immortal dawn, what they were in the middle of '90, at the holy hour of the Confederations, the zeal with which they adorned the altar of the future! and at last at the end of '92, when it was necessary to stop and give all that they loved! who could tell that? We had elsewhere undertook to disclose something, but how incompletely!

During the ten years in which I was occupied with my historical work, I had attempted in my

chair of the College of France to examine these great subjects of women and family's influence.

In 1848 especially, I saw the lead woman was called upon to take in our new circumstances. We said to the Republic: "You will not found a state without a moral reform in the family. The aroused family will only join the hearth of the new altar, founded by the Revolution.

What has so much effort accomplished? and what has become of these words? Where is their benevolent and sympathizing audience? Am I to say, like old Villon: *Where are the snows of the past year?*

But the walls, at least, remember them; the hall which vibrated with the powerful voice of Quinet; the vault where I saw each prophetic word of Mickiewicz grave itself in letters of fire.

Yes, I said to women: No person has a higher interest than you in the state, since there is no one who bears the weight of public misfortunes to a greater extent than you do.

Man gives his life and exertions; you give your children.

Who pays the tax on blood? the mother.

She is the highest bidder, and holds the most terrible stake in our affairs.

Who has more right and duty than you to surround yourself with light on such a subject, to be completely initiated in the country's destiny?

Women who read this book, do not let your attention be distracted by the various biographical anecdotes. Seriously look on the first and last pages.

In the first, what do you see?

Great sensibility and sympathy for the miseries of mankind in 1789 throw you into the Revolution. You had pitied the people, and you even raise yourself to the point of immolating family itself.

The end of the book, what is it?

Still sensibility, pity, and horror of blood, the anxious love of family, will contribute more than anything to throw you in a reaction. Horror of blood, and the white Terror (Terreur blanche) in 1795 and 1815, shed more of it by assassinations than 1793 did by scaffolds.

Family love. For the life and safety of your sons, you disavow the thought of 1792, of the de-

liverance of the world. You seek shelter under strength. What becomes of your sons? Child as I was then, my memory is faithful; until 1815, were you not in mourning?

Did your heart deceive you in 1789? Did it then embrace the world? The future will answer no. But the reaction of this period has deceived you, when you sacrificed the world to family, in order afterwards to see the family scattered, and Europe sown with the bones of your children, the past has told you that nothing can be more certain.

Another thing ought to be shown in this book for you.

Compare, I pray you, the life of our mothers and your own; theirs full, strong, and fruitful with works and noble passions; and afterwards look, if you can, at the nothingness, ennui, and languor in which our days flow away. What has been your part in this miserable half century of reaction?

Do you want me to tell you, frankly tell you, from whence proceeds this difference?

They loved the strong and living. You, you love the dead.

I call the living those whose acts and words renovate the world; those, at least, who enliven it, give it life by their activity, who float with it, drawing in the air which inflates the sails of the age, and whose word is: *Forward!*

And the dead? I thus call the trifling man, madame, who amuses you at twenty with his frivolity; the dangerous man who leads you at forty in the paths of a pious intrigue, who feeds you with little nothings, agitations without end, and fruitless ennui.

What! whilst the living world which you are ignorant of, whilst thundering, modern genius, in its terrible fruitfulness, multiplies its miracles every hour and minute, steam, daguerreotype, railroad, electric telegraph, all the mechanical and chemical arts, their benefits, their infinite gifts, poured out unknown to you (and even the dress you wear bears the effort of twenty sciences), during this prodigious movement of life, you shut yourself up in your sepulchre!

If you love the middle age, listen to the prophetic speech which I take from one of its songs, of an old, comic, and sublime prose:—

Le nouveau emporte le vieux,
L'ombre est chassé par la clarté,
Le jour met en fuite la nuit.

* * * * * * *

A genoux! et dis Amen!
Assez mangé d' herbe et de foui,
Laisse les vieilles choses—Et va!

Daughters of the long peace which has lasted since 1815, know your situation well. Do you see yonder those dark clouds which are breaking away? And do you hear under your feet the crackling of the ground, the roaring of subterranean volcanoes, the groaning of nature? Ah! this dull peace which was for you a time of languor and dreams, was for the entire people an overwhelming nightmare. It is finished—I know your heart, thank God, who lifted the heavy leaden seal under which the world was panting. This comfort in which you were languishing in effeminacy, must be ended. To speak of but one peril, who does not see approaching the barbarous rapacity of the North, the diplomatic Russian, the cunning Byzantine, thrusting Cossack ferocity towards the West.

Forget, forget that you are the daughters of peace. You will soon see yourselves in the noble

and difficult situation of our mothers in the days of great combats. How did they support these trials? It is time for you to ask.

They did not only accept the sacrifice, but loved it, and went in advance of it.

Fortune and necessity, which might have made them fearful, as it advanced, sword in hand, found them strong and smiling, without any fear of hurt or death.

Fate tried many. It struck those it loved—there again it found them greater, saying, under their veils: "Death! but an immortal one!"

To this I hear some of you say, "And we also will be great! Trial and peril come to us! Great crises will always find us ready. We will not be wanting." To danger? Yes, perhaps; but to privations? a prolonged change of situation and habits? That is the difficulty, the rock of each noble heart!

To bid an adieu to a sumptuous and abundant life, to suffer and fast, if it was necessary. To separate from this world of useless elegancies, which, in the state of our manners, seems to make the poetry of our women. Ah! this is too much! Many would prefer death!

In the years called *happy*, which led to 1848, when the moral horizon was so dark, when dull existence, not enlivened either by hope or trial, was weighing on itself, I often sought within myself something still remaining, some chance of a renovation.

Surrounded with this crowd, in which there was such faith, I was particularly affected with the frightful signs of the decay of the Lower Empire; I looked around me with anxiety. What did I see before my chair? Brilliant youth, a charming, sympathizing audience, and one of the most penetrating. Devoted to the ideal? Ah! more than one has proved it! But for the great number there was the danger of an excess of culture; boundless curiosity, versatility of mind and tendencies for such and such a system, a weakness for ingenious Utopias which promise harmonious worlds without struggle or combat, thus rendering all privation useless, causing the necessity of sacrifice and occasions of devotion to disappear.

Sacrifice is the law of the world. Who will offer themselves up?

Such was the question which I sadly asked myself.

"Let God give me a point of support," said the philosopher, "and I will undertake to raise the globe!"

There is but one point of support, the desire of sacrifice.

Will duty then suffice? No; there must be love.

Who still loves? is the second question which the moralist ought to ask himself.

An out-of-place question! No, not in this frozen world of growing interest, selfishness, political intrigue, the bank and exchange, by which we feel ourselves surrounded.

"Who loves?" Nature makes me this answer, "Who loves? Woman!"

"They love but for a day. Maternity is for a lifetime."

Then I address myself to the woman and mother, to take the great social lead.*

* The wise will say: "Thus, forsaking the firm ground of idea, you will place yourself in the yielding paths of feeling."

To which I will answer: "Very few ideas are new. Almost all those which burst out in this century, have appeared

The good Ballanche, amongst all his obscure and mystical romances, had sometimes glances of light and true intuitions. One day, to embarrass him, we asked him: "What is your opinion of women?" he thought some time. His soft eyes like a wild fawn were wilder than ever. At last, the old man, blushing like a young girl at a love speech, said: "She is an initiation!" A charming word, delicately true, in a hundred shades and ways.

Woman is active initiation, the eminently

many times before, and always uselessly. The advancement of an idea is not so much the first appearance of its formula as its final incubation, when, having been received in the powerful heat of love, it bursts out, rendered fruitful by the warmth of the heart. Then it is not a word, but a living thing; as such, it is loved and embraced, like a dear new-born babe, which humanity receives in its arms.

"Ideas and systems abound and superabound around us. Which will save us? More than one can. That belonging to the critical hour and to our circumstances, diverse according to the diversity of the times and nations.

"The great difficulty is, that the useful idea, at the decisive moment, meets prepared a hot-bed of good moral willingness, of heroic zeal, devotion, and sacrifice. Where will I find the original spark, in the universal coldness? This is what I say to myself.

"I have addressed myself to the indestructible spark, to the fire which still burns on the ruins of the world, to the immortal warmth of the maternal soul."

sweet and patient power which knows and can initiate. She herself is the object of initiation. She initiates beauty, which is herself, to its highest degree. What? sacrifice.

Sorrowful and dramatic sacrifice, often shaken by combats and efforts—in the mother, it is harmonious; her sovereign beauty.

Sacrifice elsewhere is perverted and forced. She smiles, thankfully, giving her life for those she loves, for her living, realized love (it is for the child I mean), she pants to give still a little more.

She gathers everything to supply its weaknesses, invites all to endow this cradle—Ah! has she not a diamond from on high, a star from God! The golden oar of the sybil, this infallible guide, will reassure her a little on these first trembling steps. The ray of light on which Beatrice made the loved one mount from world to world was brilliant without doubt, but had it the warmth of the tear which trembles in the mother's eye? She, who calls the world to her help, has far more within herself to endow her son with.

She has her deep mother's nature. *Sacrifice without end.*

Thanks, we wish no more. God and country do not ask it.

This one power, if it is rightly acquired, will embrace all.

What do we ask of thee, O woman? Nothing but to realize thy own nature for the one whom thou lovest, and to place it in its complete truth, which is sacrifice.

This seems very simple, but it contains much. It implies first, forgetfulness, the sacrifice of passing loves to a great and durable one.

The sacrifice of the little artificial world, the little arts of beauty, to the sovereign beauty of nature which is in thyself, if thou there seekest it, and from which thou ought to create, and ennoble the loved soul.

The last sacrifice (here is the glory and success of the trial) of the soft tender feelings which cover selfishness. The sacrifice which says: "Not for me, but for all! That he may love me! but above all that he may be great!"

I know it is a great sacrifice. This is truly the end of initiation, which the son ought to take from his mother, and which she ought to repre-

sent to him: *Love not for thyself; to prefer the world.*

If this divine elasticity of love, this dilation of the heart which does not diminish its strength, but on the contrary shows the power of its devotion, exists, what more can you wish for it? It can be no greater from that day. For then the world is in it.

THE END.

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